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Introduction

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This Best Practices Report is one of the early steps in a year-long effort to update and broaden City Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. Its purpose is to explore a range of ideas from innovative and leading communities and organizations for Fort Collins to consider and explore.

This Report is intended to serve as an educational tool and aid in generating ideas and solutions that might be applicable or adapted to Fort Collins. It summarizes the creative programs, tools, and other successful ideas from a range of communities and organizations that face similar challenges and opportunities.

The Report also helps set the stage for Phase 2 of the planning process when the public will have the opportunity to review new policy choices and analysis and weigh in on preferred directions for the community. The best practice ideas help to spur discussions about possible strategies and options to consider to achieve the community’s preferred directions for the future.

BACKGROUND MATERIALS


The case studies included in this Best Practices Report relate to the opportunities and challenges identified in the Snapshot Report, and detail how communities and organizations have addressed related challenges and opportunities in unique ways.

When reviewing this document it may also be helpful to consider the comments and feedback from all Phase 1 activities and events. A consolidated summary, as well as detailed comments from Phase 1 events are available on the City’s website: www.fcgov.com/planfortcollins.
REPORT ORGANIZATION

Sections
The best practices case studies contained within this Report are organized according to the proposed Plan Fort Collins organization, which also closely align with the City’s Budgeting for Outcomes Results categories. The main sections (chapters) are:

- Economic Health,
- Environmental Resources,
- Community and Neighborhood Livability,
- Safety and Wellness,
- Culture, Parks, and Recreation,
- Transportation, and
- High Performing Community.

The proposed Plan Fort Collins organizational structure is illustrated on page 3.

Best Practices Case Studies
Each individual best practices case study contains the following sections:

- Innovative Community or Organization: Includes details about the location, population, and other interesting details that make the community or organization noteworthy and/or relevant to Fort Collins.
- Innovative Practice(s): Includes an explanation of the community/organization’s best practice(s) and how it is exemplifying innovation.
- Background and Details: A summary of what it took for the community/organization to implement this practice, and details about the tools and methods to achieve success.
- For More Information: A list of online data sources used to research the best practice.
- Related Sections: Identifies other relevant Plan Fort Collins ideas, due to the fact that many of the case studies included in this Report were selected because they exemplified innovative ideas which connected and addressed multiple sections.

BEST PRACTICES SELECTION

The primary objective of this Best Practices Report was to research successful projects, programs, plans, and implementation strategies from other leading communities and organizations, related to challenges and opportunities identified in the Snapshot Report. Because the focus is on best practices and new ideas, the research did not focus on peer cities with the same population and attributes, but rather focused on the leading practices and ideas as the main criteria for selecting case studies. For that reason, some communities are listed multiple times throughout this Report. In addition, not all communities are in the same geographic region, nor do they have exactly similar traits to Fort Collins.

Other Best Practice Ideas
Throughout Phase 1 of the Plan Fort Collins process, the City’s Boards and Commissions members, community leaders, planning team staff, and the general public generated many ideas for best practice case studies. Due to the long lists of possibilities for additional case studies and limited staff time and resources, a select number of case studies are included for purposes of this Report. The longer lists of best practices ideas generated throughout Phase 1 are identified at the beginning of each section of this Report. These lists are provided for consideration and possible exploration as the planning process progresses toward implementation strategies.

NEXT STEPS

During Phases 2 and 3 of the planning process, additional research of best practices and innovative organizations may be warranted in order to identify new alternatives and implementation strategies to help the community achieve its vision. Additional research will be completed by planning team staff on an as-needed basis.

Your feedback and ideas about other leading communities and innovative best practices that might be pertinent to Fort Collins are welcomed and encouraged. Plan on attending future Plan Fort Collins events such as community workshops or focus groups to share your ideas, or submit your comments online at: www.fcgov.com/planfortcollins.
PROPOSED PLAN ORGANIZATION

VISION
World Class Community

- Economic Health
  - Healthy, resilient, and sustainable economy reflecting the values of our unique community in a changing world

- Environmental Resources
  - Healthy and sustainable environment
  - High quality water
  - Air and climate protection
  - Land conservation and stewardship
  - Connected systems

- Community & Neighborhood Livability
  - Thriving, quality, and attractive neighborhoods
  - Vital and attractive activity centers
  - Distinctive image and design

- Safety & Wellness
  - Safe and healthy place to live, work, learn, and play

- Culture, Parks & Recreation
  - Diverse parks, cultural, and recreational amenities
  - Creative City

- Transportation
  - Safe and reliable multi-modal options to, from, and throughout the City
  - Great streets, journeys, and destinations

- High Performing Community
  - Efficient, innovative, transparent, effective, and collaborative government
  - Triple bottom line

PHASE 2: April – July 2010

NEW POLICY CHOICES AND OUTCOMES
Testing and analysis to refine the vision and determine preferred directions

PRODUCTS
City Plan (updated to match vision structure)
Transportation Master Plan (updated)
Existing adopted plans and policies

COMPONENTS
Goals and Policies
Implementation Strategies
Action Plan
Monitoring
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Economic Health Best Practices

OVERVIEW
The best practice case studies presented in this section include creative ways that communities have bolstered support for local businesses, created new economic development initiatives, and targeted desired industries. The economic health best practice case studies are:

- **Business Incubator** – Ann Arbor, Michigan
- **Business Assistance and Resources** – Portland, Oregon
- **Business Outreach** – Seattle, Washington
- **Economic Growth and Redevelopment Programs** – Austin, Texas
- **Green Business Initiatives** – Berkeley, California

ADDITIONAL IDEAS
As the Plan Fort Collins process continues, it may be necessary to add new case studies or complete further research to implement the community’s preferred directions. Some of the additional ideas related to innovative economic health implementation strategies or case studies include:

**Innovative Practices**
- Expansion of the “Be Local” and “Buy Local” movement;
- Improving the mix of retailers in the City;
- Impact fees, utility charges, or other options to fund infrastructure maintenance and improvements long-term;
- Selling advertisement time on local access television station for revenue generation;
- Alternatives to sales tax collection for greater fiscal stability;
- Increasing workforce development and training for “green” industry jobs; and
- Formation of special districts (like the existing Library District) to finance specific services and programs.
BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Innovative Community: Ann Arbor, Michigan
Population: 114,024

Ann Arbor, Michigan is a college town that works and lives in inseparable association with the University of Michigan. Another important aspect of the economy is high technology, due in part to the University’s research and development money. Ann Arbor is similar to Fort Collins in size, demographics, and educational resources.

Innovative Practice

Ann Arbor SPARK Incubator
The mission of Ann Arbor SPARK is to advance economic development in innovation based businesses by offering programs, resources and proactive support at every stage from start-ups to large organizations looking to expand. It is a regional incubator focused on economic and business development.

Background and Details
SPARK has become a driving force in establishing Ann Arbor as a center for business expansion and location. The organization tries to identify and meet the needs of businesses at every stage. It is a partnership of government, public organizations and private companies. SPARK itself is non-profit and most services are provided at no cost. One of the major programs provided by SPARK is detailed below.

Shifting Gears Program
Shifting Gears is the pre-eminent career service offered through SPARK. It is a moderately priced ($200), five-month intensive program with three major phases of career and small-business development. The phases are:

1. **Retool Career Portfolios** – focusing on career transitions into small businesses, offering in-class sessions and small business foundation workshops.
2. **Test Trials** – focusing on three-day intensive practice simulations followed by 80 hour pro bono practicum projects.
3. **Launch Point Readiness** – special networking opportunities, practice interviews and career advice from a mentor with contacts in innovative, growing companies.

The purpose of the program is to increase the success of people who want to leverage their career experience and education to help small businesses grow. The program focuses on skilled and talented professionals who would like to increase their abilities and become more dynamic and innovative.

For More information
City of Ann Arbor website:
http://www.annarborusa.org/index.cfm

Related Sections
- High Performing Community
Innovative Community: Portland, Oregon
Population: 582,130

Portland is located in the Northwestern United States, near the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers in the state of Oregon. Portland has been referred to as the most environmentally friendly or “green” city in the United States, and the second most in the world.

Innovative Practices

Assistance and Resources for Businesses
Portland offers an extensive assortment of tools, programs, advice, and resources to assist area businesses. A number of organizations and partners work with the city to provide these resources, including:

- Portland Development Commission (PDC),
- Development Opportunity Services (DOS) Program,
- BEST Business Center,
- Business District Associations,
- Small Business Development Center, and
- Small Business Advisory Council.

Several examples of the innovative and successful business programs and resources provided in Portland are described in the following section.

Background and Details

Targeted Industry Clusters
An industry cluster is a group of geographically concentrated, inter-related firms. Companies that locate in a cluster benefit from a skilled labor force, increased innovation, coordinated advocacy efforts, high-quality supply chains, and knowledge spillover. Clusters interact in ways that establish competitive advantages through the creation and incorporation of new knowledge into products and the processes that produce them. PDC understands the importance of building strong clusters, and supports initiatives that strengthen cooperation and competitive advantages for Portland companies.

The clusters PDC targets are part of the traded sector, meaning that they sell to markets outside the region, bringing new money into the community. By focusing on clusters, instead of individual businesses, PDC can:

- Deploy limited resources in a strategic and catalytic fashion;
- Develop a deep understanding of factors influencing competitiveness;
- Interact with groups of firms rather than isolated transactions;
- Facilitate industry-led innovation and interventions; and
- Send a clear signal to regional and state partners to align resources.

Objectives for organizing Portland Clusters are:

- Convene critical players in cluster ecosystem;
- Develop detailed market analyses for each cluster defining actual market opportunities;
- Develop and implement industry-driven action plans; and
- Create self-sustaining momentum within clusters.

BEST Business Center
The BEST Business Center is a "one-stop shop" for businesses in Portland that want to become greener and more profitable. It provides a free evaluation of business operations in the areas of energy, water, waste and recycling, purchasing, green building and transportation. The evaluation includes:

- Free customized assistance from resource conservation experts;
- Sustainability reports;
- Access to financial incentives;
- Recognition; and,
- Networking opportunities.

Business District Project Resource Guide
The first edition of the Business District Project Resource Guide was created primarily with Portland’s Business District Associations (BDA’s) in mind, but is also useful for associations or any community organizations and citizens seeking to make improvements to their area.
The guide is meant to stimulate ideas for community enhancements to neighborhood commercial districts and provide basic referral and contact information for the City bureaus or agencies relevant to the projects.

**Development Opportunity Services (DOS) Program**
The Portland Development Commission (PDC) designed the Development Opportunity Services (DOS) Program for property owners in targeted neighborhoods in Portland. The purpose of the DOS Program is to assist property owners (and, in some cases, tenants) with seed money and in evaluating development project feasibility by providing real estate development expertise and technical assistance. It also supports PDC goals of revitalization by bringing new development and jobs to Portland.

Funding is available on a first-come-first-serve basis for specific pre-development activities prior to construction, including architectural planning studies, building inspection, engineering reports, market assessments, environmental studies and real estate financial analysis. DOS funding is only available for professional services related to planning for development and does not cover the preparation of construction drawings, permitting or any of the actual construction costs. PDC will grant one DOS project per property. All materials produced through a DOS project are available for public review and use.

DOS Project Managers (PDC staff) assist property owners in formulating development programs, coordinating consultants' work and evaluating development feasibility.

**Storefront Improvement Program**
The Storefront Improvement Program provides cash grants and technical assistance to business and property owners in eligible neighborhoods. Recipients can use the support for a variety of improvements, ranging from repainting to purchase of new windows and awnings. The Storefront Improvement Program has a notable track record. In neighborhoods across the city, the program has:

- Helped new and established businesses attract customers,
- Leveraged private investment from current owners and inspired improvements to neighboring buildings,
- Enhanced the appearance and charm of commercial areas while building a safer street environment, and
- Re-established pride in some of Portland's oldest and best-loved neighborhoods.

**For More information**

Portland Development Commission website: [http://www.pdc.us/default.asp](http://www.pdc.us/default.asp)

**Related Sections**
- Environmental Health
- High Performing Community
BUSINESS OUTREACH

Innovative Community: Seattle, Washington
Population: 602,000

Seattle is the northernmost major U.S. city on the west coast and the largest city in the state of Washington. It perennially has one of the highest literacy rates of major U.S. cities and is home to the largest percentage of people over the age of 25 with a college degree. Like Fort Collins, Seattle is attempting to employ mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurship and economic development.

City Business Casual
The OED connects directly with the local business community via the City Business Casual series, which are monthly, informal gatherings at local food and drink establishments designed to give the business community regular and direct access to business-focused City officials. The gatherings often host City Council members as special guests. The meetings do not have a formal agenda, but City officials make introductions and connections. Business owners have the chance to ask questions, suggest ideas and troubleshoot issues in an informal, relaxed setting. The City uses this as an opportunity to facilitate growth and collaboration among Seattle's local business community.

Bottom Line
The Bottom Line is a blog and RSS feed that posts relevant economic development stories on the City’s website. The headlines range in topic from local business forums, Seattle businesses making news, City rankings for various benchmarks, grant awards, future projects, and City events. The headlines are tagged with keywords, archived, and searchable.

Neighborhood Business Districts
Not only does Seattle have a comprehensive set of entrepreneurship resources, but it also encourages independent growth of neighborhood business districts. The City has issued a request for proposals from non-profit organizations interested in receiving funding to participate in completing projects that benefit neighborhood business districts. The project funding opportunity is designed to help neighborhood business district organizations develop and attain their goals of growing and strengthening the business community in their neighborhoods.

Mayor’s Small Business Awards
Every year, the mayor of Seattle awards ten small businesses for their excellence and diversity, and their contributions to the City’s economic vitality and quality of life.

For More information
City of Seattle Economic Development website: www.cityofseattle.net/economicdevelopment

Related Sections
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- High Performing Community
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Innovative Community: Austin, Texas
Population: 757,680

Austin is the capital of and fourth-largest city in Texas. The City is the cultural and economic center of the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metropolitan area. Like Fort Collins, Austin seeks to take a proactive role in supporting the economic health of the community.

Innovative Practices

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services

As a vital component of the City’s economic development program, the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office was created to manage the City’s economic development policies and to promote and facilitate sustainable growth, in partnership with the community, project developers, and the City of Austin. The goal is to enhance livability and economic viability in a manner that preserves the character of Austin and its environment.

Background and Details

Several of the policies, programs, and partnerships instrumental to the economic development and redevelopment program are summarized below.

City of Austin Economic Development Policy

The City of Austin strives to maintain healthy existing businesses and works to promote new business locations employing a vibrant and educated workforce. Business investment in Austin results in an improved tax base, career opportunities, economic diversity, new ideas, business exports, and new money in the local economy. Austin’s Firm-Based incentive policy incorporates community assets into companies either expanding or establishing new locations in the city. Each company is evaluated using established criteria and scored accordingly. This process ensures quality City investment into projects matching the region’s competitive advantages and results in viable opportunities for the local workforce. The Economic Development Policy is currently being updated to include emerging technologies as a new area of focus.

Emerging Technology Program

The Emerging Technology Program works to attract, retain, and facilitate growth of emerging technology firms in Austin. It serves as a central clearinghouse of information about opportunities and resources for networking, financing, market development and business development. The Emerging Technology Program target industries include:

- Clean Energy,
- Digital Media,
- Wireless,
- Biotechnology and Life Sciences, and
- Early-Stage Technology Commercialization.

Economic Development Agreements

The City of Austin strives to influence economic development to enhance livability and economic viability in a manner that preserves the character of Austin and its environment. Each economic development project is evaluated using a standard set of criteria adopted by the Austin City Council including: fiscal impact, linkages to the Austin economy, impact on city services, character and number of jobs, quality of life, environmental initiatives, project investment and other related items. The City of Austin’s economic development agreement terms are performance-based, requiring compliance with unique, specific, and tangible goals before the City makes payments on these agreements.

Business Retention and Enhancement (BRE) program

The BRE Program exists to support re-establishment of certain sectors of the City as retail and urban entertainment destinations. The BRE program provides low-interest loans for eligible costs to:

- Existing businesses located within the eligible area that are being displaced because of development, and
- Attract new businesses to the eligible area.

For More information

City of Austin Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services website:
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/redevelopment

Related Sections

- High Performing Community
GREEN BUSINESS INITIATIVES

Innovative Community: Berkeley, California
Population: 102,743

Berkeley, California is on the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay, close to Oakland and across from San Francisco. It is home to University of California Berkeley. The City of Berkeley is similar to the City of Fort Collins in that both organizations try to retain and attract green businesses and have focuses on local business and clean/renewable energy.

Innovative Practices

Green Business Initiatives
The City of Berkeley provides a range of initiatives to attract “green” businesses, help existing residents and businesses adopt green building practices, and support the local economy. A few of these initiatives include the:

- East Green Bay Corridor Partnership,
- Green Business Certification Program,
- Buy Local Berkeley,
- Commercial Renewable & Energy Efficiency Programs, and
- Commercial Recycling Services

One of the more innovative ideas related to green business is the City’s initiative to make clean energy options more accessible to more people. Otherwise, fostering a cluster, having a recycling program and supportive marketing for local businesses are not things unique to Berkeley. Notwithstanding, their branding and execution of the goals thereof are extremely effective and accessible.

Background and Details
In order to make these green business initiatives successful, the City of Berkeley focuses primarily on the strengths of the City given its culture and demographics. Being environmentally-conscious and highly educated, the City’s populace supports a strong focus on high-technology clean energy cluster, green initiatives and local businesses. Several of the City’s green initiatives are described below.

East Bay Green Corridor
The purpose of the East Bay Green Corridor Partnership is to facilitate entrepreneurship and environmental policy innovation and to develop clusters in the green/clean-tech industrial realm. The Partnership consists of eight cities, two research institutes and three educational systems, with primary goals to:

- Attract and retain green businesses;
- Promote research and technology transfer;
- Strengthen workforce development programs; and
- Secure federal funding for job training and energy research.

Green Business Certification Program
The Bay Area Green Business Certification Program created industry specific environmental checklists with which it educates small business owners about measures they can take to reduce energy costs, as well as water and solid waste. Businesses become green certified after meeting requirements of a rigorous examination.

Buy Local Berkeley
Buy Local Berkeley is an initiative to educate local consumers about the community impacts of their spending habits. The initiative explains the cultural, environmental, community and economic benefits of local shopping. The initiative includes lists of reasons to buy local on its pamphlet-like website.
Commercial Renewable and Energy Efficiency Programs
The City of Berkeley offers many programs to small businesses and households to reduce energy use and costs. A few of these programs are the Berkeley FIRST Solar Financing program which allows property owners to finance photovoltaic banks to help power their properties, and the Smart Lights for Small Businesses program which rebates the installation of energy and money saving smart lights.

Commercial Recycling Services
The City of Berkeley’s Office of Economic Development also offers Commercial Recycling Services. These services include guidelines on what can and cannot be recycled, and representative visits to business sites to design programs to maximize disposal efficiency.

For More information
East Bay Green Corridor website:
http://greencorridor.berkeley.edu

Green Business Certification Program website:
www.greenbiz.ca.gov

Buy Local Berkeley website:
www.buylocalberkeley.com

City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development Green Business website:
http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?objectDisplayType=Collection&portalID=230&workAreaCollectionID=538

Related Sections
- Environmental Health
- High Performing Community
Environmental Resources Best Practices

OVERVIEW

The best practice case studies presented in this section demonstrate innovations in managing and protecting valuable environmental resources. The case studies address the topics of energy production and management, stormwater and water management, green infrastructure, and open space programs and acquisitions. The environmental resources best practice case studies are:

Energy

- Alternative Energy Production – Chelan County, Washington
- Energy Use and Management – Austin Energy, Texas

Stormwater and Water

- Stormwater Low Impact Development – Los Angeles, California
- Water Management and Conservation – Albuquerque, New Mexico

Other Topics

- Green Infrastructure – Loudoun County, Virginia
- Open Space Funding – Boulder, Colorado
- Wildlands Acquisition – Austin, Texas

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Additional research of other organizations and ideas may be warranted as the planning process progresses, based on the community’s preferred directions. Ideas for additional research related to environmental resources include:

Organizations and Programs

- Boulder, Colorado’s integrated smart grid technology;
- Colorado Governor’s Energy Office Flexible Energy Program;
- Sacramento Municipal Energy District’s Smart Metering Program;
- Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster’s benchmarking results (includes Portland, San Diego, Toronto, British Columbia, and Research Triangle, North Carolina);
- Energy Trust of Oregon;
- University of Colorado at Boulder’s Innovative Thinking Program;
- Rocky Mountain Climate Organization; and
- The Nature of Cities film.

Innovative Practices

- Adapting and preparing for changing energy needs;
- Retrofitting and designing buildings to reduce water and energy use;
- Using landscape buffers for water quality protection in agricultural areas;
- Developing fully planned sustainable communities (such as Stapleton Redevelopment in Denver, and Geos in Arvada, Colorado);
- Agricultural land protection efforts (such as the City of Davis, California, and Montgomery County, Maryland);
- Addressing wildlife in the city (Tucson, Arizona, and Denver, Colorado); and
- Connecting open lands into an integrated system that serves multiple purposes (including stormwater, agriculture, and transportation).
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION

Innovative Community: Chelan County, Washington
Population: 66,000

Chelan County is located in central Washington, about 140 miles west of Seattle, and is part of the Columbia River Basin. The County is known for its vast apple orchards and its County seat, Wenatchee is considered the “apple capital of the world”. Many of the hydrological dams that supply electricity to the Northwest are located in this area.

Innovative Practice

Alternative Energy Production
Chelan County’s Public Utility District has an award-winning renewable energy program called Sustainable Alternative Natural Power or SNAP. The Chelan County SNAP program received the 2003 National Renewable Energy Recognition Award from the Interstate Renewable Energy Council.

The award recognizes innovative renewable energy projects and programs. It is made annually to nonfederal government agencies and nonprofit organizations that demonstrate innovation in education, energy policy, research and development or demonstration projects.

SNAP began in August 2001 when customers asked for the option to purchase energy from alternative sources. The program links local customers who want to purchase solar and wind power with local residents who want to produce it.

Background and Details

Public Utility District
Chelan County Public Utility District (PUD) acts as an intermediary, collecting funds from customers who voluntarily pay a little more on their electric bills each month. All of the funds collected are paid to local customer-owned solar or wind energy producers. Generation from these producers is added to the PUD’s hydro resources and transferred across the utility’s electrical grid. These customer donations are collected by the PUD and distributed once a year to SNAP producers – individuals, schools and nonprofit agencies that are generating solar and wind power. Renewable energy generated by SNAP producers goes into the PUD’s electrical grid and is distributed to PUD customers. Customers who support SNAP are helping build a base of renewable energy in Chelan County.

Partners
SNAP built support within the community and now has over 20 partners that contribute to the renewable energy production, including seven school districts, individuals and a variety of community and government facilities. The Alcoa Community Solar Endowment and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) contributed more than $1 million in materials and labor for the installation of more than 30 solar stations at all schools and seven nonprofit agencies in Chelan County.

Due to national interest in the program, the PUD’s Board of Commissioners approved allowing other utilities to model their own alternative-energy programs after the trademarked SNAP program. Utilities must agree to preserve basic concepts of SNAP. The state now requires the PUD to offer customers the option to purchase such energy.

For More Information
Chelan County Public Utility District SNAP Program website:
http://www.chelanpud.org/snap.html

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- High Performing Government
ENERGY USE AND MANAGEMENT

Innovative Organization: Austin Energy, Texas

Austin Energy is the ninth largest public power utility in the country. Austin Energy is viewed by many industry experts as being a leader in conservation and renewable energy, in the use and management of distributed generation, and in using IT solutions to deliver a fully-integrated utility (Smart Grid). Additionally, Austin Energy has been recognized three times by the Environmental Protection Agency as an Energy Star award winner for its outstanding contributions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by promoting energy-efficient home improvements for existing homes.

Innovative Practice

Progressive Approach to Energy Use and Management

Austin Energy’s portfolio of energy efficiency programs is among the most comprehensive in the nation. Their programs and offerings serve homeowners and businesses. Austin Energy’s energy efficiency programs and offerings date back to 1982. Combined, they have saved more electricity than the annual output of a 500 megawatt power plant. A 500 megawatt power plant can power 50,000 homes. Austin Energy’s programs seek to integrate rebates, incentives, technical assistance, and customer service within a regulated and code-enhanced framework that encourages and guides its customers toward becoming highly energy efficient.

Programs that exhibit innovation include:

- **Power Saver Program**: Free home improvements for income qualified customers, including renters.
- **Power Partner Thermostat**: Free programmable thermostat and installation and warranty (as part of load management participation), including an incentive to subscribe for an additional five minute cycle-off time.
- Separate commercial, small business, and non-profit rebates and incentives, including specific rebates for data centers.
- Comprehensive integration with their Green Building program to maximize incentives, guidance for their customers.
- Residential rebates for solar water heaters, solar photovoltaic, and Energy Star home performance (attic insulations, air conditioning units, caulking, duct sealing, solar screens, weather stripping, and additional bonus rebates).
- An online tool for home energy analysis helps residential users identify energy use compared to other homes.

Background and Details

In 2004, Austin Energy was one of leading utilities to begin upgrading and integrating its antiquated electric grid with Smart Grid technology and by replacing mechanical electric meters with state-of-the-art automated meters (AMR). It has completed installing the AMR devices in customers’ homes and is well on its way to completing many of the other components involved with Smart Grid upgrades. Austin Energy views Smart Grid and AMI technology applications as an important strategy in providing the best services to its customers in a responsible and cost-effective way.

Smart Grid key benefits to customers include faster notification of outages, better usage information, improved timeliness and accuracy of billing, remote service, and future applications for smart appliances.

Smart Grid key benefits to Austin Energy include reduced operating costs, improved outage and asset management, reduced number of delayed and estimated bills, reduced energy theft, improved distribution load management and planning, reduced need for additional generation, and transmission capacity.
Overall, Austin Energy continues to trail blaze among utility industry leaders for its strong policy, long-term and strategic planning and program support of energy efficiency programs and smart grid. These strategies fit into its mission to, “deliver clean, affordable, reliable energy and excellent customer service.”

The dedication of resources, both capital and personnel, illustrates their commitment to reducing Austin Energy's impacts to their community and the environment, while seeking economically feasible and responsible solutions to provide excellent service to customers.

For More information
Austin Energy website:
www.austinenergy.com

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- High Performing Government
STORMWATER LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Innovative Community: Los Angeles, California
Population: 3.8 million

The City of Los Angeles, California is an extremely large city, spanning over 498 square miles. Part of the City’s Department of Public works, the Watershed Protection Division, is responsible for the development and implementation of stormwater pollution abatement projects throughout the city.

Innovative Practice

Incorporating Sustainable Stormwater Low Impact Development Practices

Under the Federal Clean Water Act, each county and municipality throughout the nation is issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The goal of the permit is to stop polluted discharges from entering the storm drain system and local coastal waters. The Watershed Protection Division’s pollution abatement projects are designed to meet the requirements of the NPDES Permit.

Stormwater pollution, water shortages, flood control, climate change, and the availability of natural green space have all become pressing environmental issues for cities around the nation including the City of Los Angeles. Many of these environmental concerns can be addressed by Low Impact Development (LID).

LID can be described as the use of practices that encourage site sustainability and smart growth in a manner that respects and preserves the characteristics of a City’s watersheds, drainage paths, water supplies, and natural resources. Or in simpler words – bringing nature back to the City to help with urban runoff management, water conservation, and improving the quality of the City’s waters. LID reduces the impact from urban development and provides the benefits of replenishing ground water supplies, improving the quality of surface water runoff, stabilizing natural stream characteristics, preserving natural site characteristics and minimizing downstream impacts.

Background and Details

The City of Los Angeles has an innovative approach to stormwater management. By seeking to address storm water issues such as pollution prevention, water quality and low impact development in addition to flood control, Los Angeles is a developing leading edge policy to improve the overall quality of its stormwater management systems. Notably, Los Angeles is working to integrate its LID strategies into its Urban Runoff Master Plan and Green Building and Design Standards. Most recently Los Angeles passed an ordinance amending the City code to expand applicability of the existing runoff mitigation plan requirements by providing stormwater and rainwater LID strategies for planning and construction of development and redevelopment projects that require building permits. Additionally, Los Angeles amended the municipal code to collect fees to recover the cost of providing Best Management Practices plan check to comply with their Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plans, Site Specific Mitigation Plan or Low Impact Development Plan.

Los Angeles views the incorporation of LID practices as a key strategy to managing urban runoff and improving water quality as well as addressing issues such as climate change and the City’s energy use, reducing capital costs, water supply and demand and supporting the development of green jobs and the local economy.

For More information

City of Los Angeles Stormwater Program website: www.lastormwater.org

Related Sections

- Economic Health
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- High Performing Government
WATER MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

Innovative Community: Albuquerque, New Mexico
Population: 522,000

Albuquerque is the largest city in New Mexico, located in the center of the state with the Rio Grande River flowing through the city. It was ranked by the U.S. Census Bureau as the sixth fastest growing city in the nation in 2007. Water is a precious resource in the West, maybe even more so in the dry, desert Southwest, especially when coupled with significant population growth.

Innovative Practice

Water Management and Conservation
Albuquerque used to be one of the highest users of water in the Southwest. In 1989, citizens used on average 279 gallons-per-capita-per-day (GPCD). In 1994, City of Albuquerque leaders called for a 30% reduction in water use in ten years. The City was able to achieve this goal by 1995 and has since set a new target of reducing water use another 10% from 1994 levels by 2014 (150 GPCD goal). Mandated by the state to reduce use to 155 GPCD by 2028 to continue use the water from the local San Juan Chama water project, Albuquerque is well ahead of the curve.

Background and Details

Albuquerque has taken multiple routes to ensuring the community has responsibly reduced their water use by providing programs and incentives, but also sought to manage its water resources by planning for a sustainable water supply. The mayor provides leadership and is a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Water Council. Albuquerque has recently moved from sole reliance of a local aquifer for drinking water to using more surface water from the San Juan Chama River. This project was decades in the making and ensures that the aquifer can be used for reserve and drought protection in the future. This new practice ensures economic stability for the area and additional water security. The project has many aspects in place to mitigate the negative environmental impacts the river habitat and ecosystem may experience from the diversion of water. The aggressive water conservation campaign that the City has pursued substantially complements their water supply plans.

The City has aggressively pursued internal practices to reduce water use through park management and use of xeriscaping (low water use landscaping), use of water meters on park sites, updated equipment for irrigation, and low flow toilets and fixtures at community centers and in public housing units. Albuquerque does differ from Colorado in that it is able to reuse and recycle water and harvest rainwater. Despite this key difference, Albuquerque has been able to accomplish much of its water conservation success through customer and citizen participation in rebate programs that reward water use through the purchase of low flow water fixtures and toilets, the promotion of xeriscaping within the community, hot water recirculating systems, conservation irrigation equipment, Energy Star clothes washers, and others.

Additionally, Albuquerque has instituted policy-level tools to encourage water conservation. The City has permanent water restrictions during the months of April through October for use of irrigation systems between the hours of 11am and 7pm. Albuquerque has tiered water rates during the irrigation season (March-November) and calculates a conservation average to calculate costs for customers during the non-irrigation months. The City also has an
ordinance against water waste and enforces this strictly with fees for first time violations of $20 up to $2000 for repeated violations. For the City, this ordinance and its enforcement is a key strategy in water conservation and efficiency, as well as a way to better preserve city streets and avoid the creation of public safety hazards.

The City of Albuquerque and the water utility have taken water conservation and management seriously and made significant accomplishments in water use reduction and waste in the last 15 years. Much of this effort is beyond what is regulated and mandated from the state of New Mexico. This City illustrates that with aggressive goals, policies, education, programs and enforcement that they are likely to succeed in managing their water supply and the use of their water for its citizens now and for future generations.

For More information

City of Albuquerque website:
www.cabq.gov/

Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority website:
http://www.abcwua.org/

Related Sections
- Culture, Parks, and Recreation
- Economic Health
- High Performing Government
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Innovative Community: Loudoun County, Virginia
Population: 283,387

Loudoun County is part of the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, bordered by the Blue Ridge Mountains and Potomac River. While traditionally a rural county, its population has grown dramatically since the 1990s, which has led to greater urbanization and development pressures. The programs and lessons learned in green infrastructure in Loudoun County are applicable to communities like Fort Collins, which feature valuable natural resources and lands throughout and at the periphery of the community.

Innovative Practices

Green Infrastructure
Loudoun County is known for having one of the first comprehensive land use plans that featured green infrastructure as a key element. The plan considered natural resources such as rivers, streams, forests and aquifer recharge areas as important as infrastructure such as roads and sewer lines and was extremely ambitious in its protection of natural resources. Home to sprawling commercial developments found at the edge of nearby cities and large subdivisions that give way to rolling hills, farms, vineyards and thick forests, Loudoun County has a somewhat mixed view on development and land use, depending on current political views and the specific area of the county. Even so, Loudoun County offers an innovative landowner outreach program that offers a variety of special services and benefits to farmers and other large landowners to help supplement regulatory and land acquisition programs.

Background and Details
The Loudoun Agricultural and Forestal District Program was formed in 1979 under State enabling legislation. The purpose of the Agricultural District is to “conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural and forestal lands for the production of food and other agricultural and forestal products, and conserve and protect agricultural and forestal lands as valued natural and ecological resources which provide essential open spaces for clean air sheds, as well as for aesthetic purposes.” Today, the Loudoun program includes myriad programs and activities that support the above efforts, including:

- Farms producing livestock, milk, eggs, vegetables, hay, fruit, and trees. Farm Tours are available throughout the year, including farming for kids, color tours in the fall and spring tours.
- Natural trail tours/hikes.
- Seasonal items, such as pick-your-own Christmas trees, wreaths, garlands, poinsettias and other holiday items.
- Community Supported Agriculture which enables residents to buy a subscription from farmers who, in return, provide residents with weekly produce packages picked fresh from the farm.
- Farmers markets available at numerous locations from May through November.
- Nursery plants and flowers grown for direct sale to consumers, as well as wholesale.
- Pick-your-own fruits, vegetables, flowers and other farm-grown products.
- Vineyard tours and wine.
- Bed & Breakfast Inns

The program includes an education component that works with the agricultural community on methods to keep agricultural land in production. Staff associated with the program inform the agricultural community about land conservation tools, state property tax benefits, conservations easements, and conservation and mitigation banking and economic tools including: tourism, farm stays and farm-to-market activities.

More than a decade has been spent rearranging the commodities provided by the farms, resulting in a much more diversified and prosperous rural economy. The farms are now offering higher value commodities, many new consumer-oriented and value added products and have more public
engagement at their local and rural venues. As well, open lands and natural areas continue to be preserved.

Properties that qualify, through the accompanying Land Use Assessment Program, are able to defer real estate taxes on lands that qualify for agricultural, horticultural, forestry or open space uses. With a recorded commitment to keep the property in a qualifying use, a landowner can qualify for additional tax deferrals. A landowner can also voluntarily enter into conservation easements to protect open space/lands. The easements must be held by a public entity. Loudoun currently has more than 40,000 acres enrolled in the program.

**For More information**

Loudoun County website:  
http://inter4.loudoun.gov/

Loudoun County Office of Rural Economic Development website:  
http://www.loudounfarms.org/

**Related Sections**

- Economic Health
- Safety and Wellness
- High Performing Community
Innovative Community: Boulder, Colorado
Population: 103,650

Boulder is located approximately 40 miles south of Fort Collins and is similar in many ways: population and demographics; adjacent to the foothills, home to a major university; and values its natural resources. Boulder is well known for its land conservation and environmental protection efforts.

Innovative Practice

Continuous Open Space Program Funding
In 1967, Boulder voters made history by approving a 4/10 of a cent sales tax specifically to buy, manage and maintain open space. This was the first time citizens in any U.S. city had voted to tax themselves specifically for open space. The sales tax measure passed by a 57% majority, an overwhelming demonstration of support in an era of citizen tax concern. There is no sunset provision in this tax, making it a perpetual tax, which helps the community plan for and manage its open space program.

Background and Details
Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks program is the product of a long history of actions taken by the City of Boulder government and the people of Boulder in response to their concern for the preservation of buffer areas, open space and the mountain backdrop. Citizen involvement in the open space preservation effort continued over many years with public education a major focus. Boulder's City Council lent its support to the effort.

For More Information
City of Boulder website: www.bouldercolorado.gov

Related Sections
• Economic Health
• Culture, Parks, and Recreation
WILDLANDS ACQUISITION

Leading Community:  Austin, Texas
Population:  743,074

Several major ecosystems converge in Austin: plains in the north; forests in the east; wet grasslands in the southeast and arid lands in the west. Like many communities throughout the country, Austin values conservation of its wildlands - areas of land undisturbed for purposes of agriculture, urban or industrial uses that provide a valuable ecosystem function – and has established programs to manage these areas.

Innovative Practice

Land Acquisition Program
Experience demonstrates that a variety of items are necessary for comprehensive natural area/open space programs. In addition to regulations, strong acquisition components, backed by reliable, long-term funding are essential. Austin is known as having one of the most ambitious and successful land acquisition programs in the country, driven by the Endangered Species Act and water quality issues. The City’s work has paid off in tens of thousands of acres being protected from future development, in limited development of many more acres due to environmental standards that have been enacted, and by increasing public awareness of the ecological importance of being a nature-friendly community.

Background and Details
Austin’s early attempts at land acquisition relied on general revenue funds. In the 1990’s, almost all of their major public land acquisitions were a result of successful bond issues, each passing with high voter support (55 to 65 percent approval ratings). Their more significant acquisitions include:

- **Austin Nature Preserves** – Properties acquired through bond money, some general revenue funds, through re-designation of park lands as preserves and through donations. The preserves house Austin’s Nature and Science Center and cover 1,070 acres set aside as sanctuaries for native plants, animals and unique natural features. Maintenance for the area is provided by one staff person, as well as nonprofit and community group support.

- **Balcones Canyonlands Preserve** – Properties acquired through bonds, grants and other small sources. This preserve covers 26,000 acres of land (13,035 held by the City of Austin) and was acquired primarily for habitat protection purposes. The preserve houses eight species of animals listed as endangered. The remainder of the preserve is held by other participating organizations. The preserve is managed by Austin’s Water Utility in conjunction with Parks and Recreation. This was done because the utility has a steady, independent revenue stream (from water tap fees).

- **Water Quality Protection Lands** – Properties acquired through bonds to protect land in the Drinking Water Protection Zone. 15,000 acres were ultimately acquired. Unlike the other lands, this area has been reserved to protect water quality, with habitat protection as a secondary consideration. However, the lands are still required to comply with the Endangered Species Act.

Austin has established the necessary legal and policy links between utilities and open space preservation. Since Austin pumps most of its water from wells, water tap fees are used to manage lands to protect aquifer recharge areas. These areas are also prime wildlife habitat, so these land acquisitions serve a double purpose. Tying these to the utility funding stream helps ensure ongoing, sustainable funding for these natural areas for years to come.

For More information
City of Austin website:
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/wildland/default.htm

Related Sections
- Neighborhood and Community Livability
- High Performing Community
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Community and Neighborhood Livability Best Practices

OVERVIEW

The best practice case studies in this section focus on issues related to development and land uses, community transformation, code reform, and affordable housing. The community and neighborhood livability best practice case studies are:

**Development, Land Use, and Planning**
- **Corridor Development** – Twin Cities, Minnesota
- **Development Patterns and Urban Design** – Austin, Texas
- **Growth Management and Mixed-Use Development** – Eugene, Oregon
- **Infill and Redevelopment** – Palo Alto, California
- **Transit Oriented Development** – Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Cleveland, Ohio

**Codes and Regulations**
- **Building Rehabilitation Code** – State of New Jersey
- **Zoning Code** – Denver, Colorado

**Affordable Housing**
- **Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund** – Denver, Colorado
- **Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing** – Portland, Oregon

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Additional research of the following community and neighborhood livability-related best practice suggestions or other new ideas may be conducted as the planning process progresses:

**Innovative Practices**
- Riverwalk development (e.g., San Antonio, Estes Park);
- Community transformation (e.g., Plano, Texas);
- Incentives for infill development (e.g., reduced fees, revised standards, etc.);
- Transformation of vacant commercial space into affordable housing units (such as Boston, Massachusetts);
- Integrating high performing/"green" practices and affordable housing;
- Developing purchasing co-operatives for affordable housing development (for materials such as insulation, windows, etc.);
- Accessory dwelling units to meet changing household and affordable housing needs;
- Assisting mobile home residents with relocation or other options as redevelopment occurs;
- Providing housing opportunities for those with criminal backgrounds, mental health issues, and problems with financial stability; and
- Long-term funding options for future affordable housing development.
**CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT**

**Innovative Community:** Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, Minnesota  
**Population:** 2.85 million

The Twin Cities area’s focus on redevelopment and densities along corridors is relevant as Fort Collins matures and faces redevelopment-related opportunities and challenges, even if the demographics are different.

**Innovative Practice**

**Corridor Development Initiative**

The initiative emerged from the need for communities and cities in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis-St. Paul) metropolitan area to work more effectively together to guide future development. The initiative offers an educational forum on development and design that helps to link city goals with market realities. It also helps to create awareness around how a local area fits within a larger regional context, and helps to better connect housing, jobs and transportation.

In particular, the initiative aims to assist in the planning and development of higher density affordable housing. To achieve its goal, the initiative set out to teach local people why density can be a good thing. The core of the initiative is a SimCity-like exercise in which residents could play the entrepreneur — creating a development plan and seeing what happens if a proposed infill project gets snipped down to a density neighbors prefer.

Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) is a non-profit organization that helps to resolve conflicts by engaging all interested parties from the outset of a development proposal. The result is that development opportunities move more efficiently through the public review system. Neighborhoods have the chance to make sure proposed projects meet their community vision, and developers reduce the amount of time between making a proposal and breaking ground. As one developer put it, “What would have taken two years was done in four months.”

In addition to facilitating an engagement process, the CDI provides resources in the form of educational materials on topics such as mixed-use developments, density fact sheets, PowerPoint presentations, and videos.

The Initiative has a proven track record and has successfully helped 16 communities deal with development and neighborhood issues. It won a National American Planning Association Excellence Award for a Grassroots Initiative in 2007.

**Background and Details**

A typical initiative lasts six months and is overseen by an advisory group of city staff and elected officials, community and business associations, and volunteer committees. The advisory group works with initiative technical team to identify key issues, aggregate current planning reports and studies, and propose specific opportunity sites to be explored for development opportunities. The group is also responsible for:

- Designing and guiding a series of community workshops,
- Developing an outreach and communication strategy to recruit participation, and
- Reviewing the materials and recommendations provided through the Corridor Development Initiative process.

Such a process is particularly relevant to Fort Collins as it increases its emphasis on infill and redevelopment strategies. The challenge of redevelopment projects is to address neighborhood concerns while still meeting the overall community goals.

**For More information**

Corridor Development Initiative website: www.corridordevelopment.org

**Related Sections**

- Transportation
- High Performing Community
DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND URBAN DESIGN

Leading Community: Austin, Texas
Population: 757,680

Austin is the capital of Texas, located in central Texas and fourth largest city in Texas. Austin is the cultural and economic center of the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metropolitan area. Like Fort Collins and the Northern Colorado region, Austin and the surrounding Central Texas region are experiencing rapid growth in population, employment, and land area affected by development.

Innovative Practice

Development Patterns and Land Use Planning Programs
As mentioned, above, Austin and the surrounding central Texas region are experiencing rapid growth in population, employment, and land area affected by development. Regional projections are even more dramatic. This increase in population will inevitably change Austin and central Texas; however, the City has taken steps to guide and shape this future growth. Through the adoption of a Smart Growth Initiative, urban design standards, and formation of the Great Streets Development Program, and other efforts, the City has made great strides in minimizing the negative environmental, economic, and social impacts and preserving the best aspects of life in the region.

Background and Details

Smart Growth Initiative
In the late 1990’s the Austin City Council adopted a Smart Growth Initiative to modernize the City’s long-range plan for growth, managing and directing growth that minimized damage to the environment and helped build a more livable community. The tenets of the City’s Smart Growth initiative were consistent with the general policies of Austin Tomorrow (the City’s Comprehensive Plan), discouraging growth in the west to protect Austin’s water supply and growing the City’s boundaries in the east, taking into account geographical and utility constraints.

The goals of the Smart Growth Initiative and the Smart Growth Map still provide a long-range framework today—determining how and where to grow, improving quality of life, and enhancing the tax base. A major effort is currently underway in 2010 to update the City’s Smart Growth Plan.

Standards for Urban Design
As part of their 1997 Downtown Initiative to guide the revitalization of downtown, the City Council requested that the Austin Design Commission prepare a set of design guidelines for new construction in the city center. The purpose of the Downtown Austin Design Guidelines is to coordinate and orchestrate the overall development of the city core so that projects help each other succeed and result in a better, livable downtown. In May 2000, the City Council adopted the Downtown Austin Design Guidelines as “recommendations for all downtown development and redevelopment projects, by both the public and private sector.”

In August 2006, the Austin City Council approved a major amendment to the City of Austin’s Land Development Code referred to as the Design Standards and Mixed Use Subchapter, or “Commercial Design Standards”.

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY BEST PRACTICES BEST PRACTICES
Great Streets Development Program
The Great Streets Development Program provides a mechanism to improve the quality of downtown streets and sidewalks, aiming ultimately to transform the public right-of-ways into great public spaces. It provides financial assistance to private developers with the cost of implementing streetscape standards that go above and beyond the City’s minimum requirements. The program allows the City to leverage needed above and below ground streetscape improvements from private developments by sharing the cost of implementing Great Streets enhancements. The program establishes criteria for the City's financial participation in a project based on the following reimbursement criteria:

- Location of the project and its impact on pedestrian activity;
- Location along a Capital Metro transit route;
- Implementation of underground utility improvements;
- Implementation of streetscape improvements;
- Introduction of active uses such as sidewalk cafes; and
- Incorporation of place-making/public art/special features.

For More information
City of Austin website:
www.ci.austin.tx.us

Related Sections
- Environmental Resources
- Transportation
- High Performing Community
COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY BEST PRACTICES

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Innovative Community: Eugene, Oregon
Population: 154,620

The City of Eugene, Oregon is the second largest city in the state of Oregon. Like Fort Collins, Eugene is a university town and deals with many of the land use and built environment issues that Fort Collins faces, including, downtown revitalization, mixed-use development, and growth management.

Innovative Practices

Growth Management and Mixed-Use Development
Regional planning in the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area stresses the interdependence between development patterns and efficient, effective transportation. With the adoption of the Growth Management Study, in 1998, and the regional transportation master plan (TransPlan), in 2001, the concept of mixed-use development became the official growth management policy for the City of Eugene. TransPlan identifies dozens of potential "mixed-use centers" in Eugene and Springfield. If properly planned and developed, these centers will mature into quality neighborhoods that enjoy higher densities, a mix of activities, more transportation options, convenient shopping and services, and amenities. When combined with improved transit, mixed-use centers will reduce the reliance on automobile travel and the need for costly street improvements; slow sprawl onto nearby agricultural and forest lands; and provide a greater variety of housing types inside the urban growth boundary. A few of the factors contributing to implementation of the growth management policy are discussed in the next section.

Background and Details

Metro and Community Planning Division
The Metro and Community Planning division of the Planning Department focuses on major, multi-year projects that will yield information and policies to help guide economically, socially and environmentally sustainable growth and development patterns over the longer term. These projects explore how and where the City will grow and develop, how to balance compact growth with protection of neighborhood character, how to create walkable neighborhoods with good transit access, what additional natural character needs protection, and how to address neighborhood needs in a neighborhood-based planning context.

House Bill 3337
The 2007 Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3337, which required Eugene and Springfield to each establish separate Urban Growth Boundaries, by dividing the metropolitan boundary that Eugene and Springfield had shared for more than 25 years. The new law also required that the cities of Eugene and Springfield complete a study of the sufficiency of residential buildable land within their respective Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) by December 31, 2009.

In establishing separate UGBs, the cities must address all of the state’s applicable planning goals and administrative rules. Each city must make estimates of its residential and employment land inventory and needs. This work also addresses a desire for agreement on how to manage growth (e.g., whether the UGB should be expanded and, if so, where). Such agreement has been elusive, in part because there has not been agreement on the amount or location of vacant land available for development or the amount of land that future growth is likely to consume. For both legal and practical reasons, the cities both want an accurate, current, and well-documented assessment of land supply and demand.

Eugene Comprehensive Lands Study
In January 2008, the Eugene City Council directed staff to conduct an assessment of residential, industrial and commercial lands, as well as non-employment lands (e.g., parks, open space). The comprehensive lands assessment has six primary technical tasks: (1) buildable lands inventory, (2) inventory of non-economic lands, (3) economic
opportunities analysis, (4) housing needs analysis, (5) analysis of needs for non-economic lands, and (6) determination of the sufficiency of land within Eugene’s UGB.

Infill Compatibility Standards Adopted
In December 2009, the Eugene City Council adopted three ordinances related to improving the compatibility and design of infill development. The City recognized that while well-designed infill can help prevent urban sprawl, poorly designed infill can be counter-productive. Incompatible infill is not only undesirable in itself, but it can actually make urban sprawl worse if residents prefer to escape to outlying areas. Eugene adopted the infill compatibility standards to prevent the negative impacts of infill so that the City can focus on increasing density and enhancing the character of existing neighborhoods. These standards address parking strategies, building heights, and establish a special area zone.

For More information
City of Eugene website: www.eugene-or.gov

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- Safety and Wellness
- Transportation
INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Innovative Community: Palo Alto, CA
Population: 64,484

The City of Palo is situated in the South San Francisco Bay Area in Santa Clara County, encompassing about 26 square miles of land. The City includes portions of Stanford University and is headquarters to a number of Silicon Valley high-technology companies, including Hewlett-Packard, Box.net, BMW, Xerox, and Facebook. Like Fort Collins, it has highly rated public schools, a high quality of life, and a vibrant downtown.

Innovative Practices

Infill and Redevelopment
Similar to the City of Fort Collins, Palo Alto’s Growth Management Area boundary is essentially fixed, resulting in greater emphasis on infill and redevelopment. Less than one percent of the City’s land area consists of vacant, developable land. Therefore, the amount of urban land in Palo Alto in 2010 was projected to remain essentially the same as it was in 1998, with growth occurring through infill and redevelopment. Most of the new infill development activity has been directed within the urban service area, particularly along transit corridors and near employment centers, or redevelopment of existing areas.

Some of the most significant opportunities for growth and change in the Palo Alto area are on Stanford University lands. In general, the University supports the concept of compact development on campus. Recent joint planning efforts between the City and University include the University Avenue Multi-modal Transit Station, Stanford Medical Center and hospital, and Stanford Shopping Center redevelopment projects. The latter two projects will represent the largest single redevelopment in the history of Palo Alto.

The value of focusing on infill and redevelopment include creation of a more compact urban pattern, greater support for transit, and protection of important natural resources, especially the Bay Shore and foothills. Lower intensity development is located adjacent to these natural open lands.

Background and Details

A few of the factors contributing to the success of the City’s infill and redevelopment efforts are discussed below.

City/University Collaboration
In 1985 a three-party interjurisdictional agreement was created with the City, Santa Clara County, and Stanford University to guide infill and redevelopment projects on campus.

Based on a shared vision and agreements between the City and University, much headway has been accomplished to create innovative and sustainable solutions for campus redevelopment.

One such example of this successful collaboration is the Stanford Hospital redevelopment project, which is projected to include 1,100,000 gross feet of new construction, demolition of a portion of the existing building and 700 car parking garage, and reuse and renovation of existing facilities.

Policy and Land Use Code Changes
The City has revised many of its policies and provisions in the Land Use Code to support infill and redevelopment. These revisions include:

- New policy language to encourage any new development within the Stanford Shopping Center occur through infill, including development on existing parking lots.
- New language to strengthen compatibility policies to avoid abrupt changes in scale and density between residential and non-residential areas and between residential areas of different densities. Zoning District boundaries are placed at mid-block locations rather than along streets, to promote enhanced compatibility and gradual transitions between land uses.
- Consideration of a more design-oriented approach to regulations resulting in a “form-
based” code (during the Zoning Code update).

- New mixed-use zoning standards to permit live/work designations by allowing housing and other uses such as office, retail and light industrial to co-exist in the same building space, or site.
- New design standards for all mixed-use designations providing for buildings with one to three stories, rear parking or underground parking, street-facing windows and entries, and zero setback along the street, except that front gardens may be provided for ground floor residential uses.
- New transportation implementation strategies to encourage infill, redevelopment, and re-use of vacant or underutilized parcels employing minimum density requirements that are appropriate to support transit, bicycling, and walking.
- Promoting mixed-use development to provide housing and commercial services near employment centers, thereby reducing the necessity of driving. Locating higher density development along transit corridors and near intermodal transit stations.

For More information

City of Palo Alto website:
http://www.cityofpaloalto.org

Related Sections

- Transportation
- High Performing Community
TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Innovative Organization: Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority – Cleveland, Ohio

In 2007, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) developed a best practices report on transit oriented development, with several of the communities and their practices. While land use and transportation are inherently linked, this case study focuses on land use and urban design strategies to support transit corridor implementation success.

Innovative Practices

Transit Oriented Development
Most of the examples in the GCRTA Study coordinated rail transit projects; the examples listed below can also be used for high frequency bus transit corridors as well. The case studies discussed in the following section are likely applicable to potential new Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in Fort Collins, especially in Downtown and along or adjacent to the City’s future Enhanced Travel Corridors.

Background and details

Dallas, TX – Dallas Area Rapid Transit
Dallas is an example of a place where market factors, rather than supportive public policy, are leading the push for TOD. Since the opening of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) system, more than $800 million in new commercial and residential investment within walking distance of the DART line either has been constructed or is being built. Most of this investment has occurred on outlying urban villages away from downtown Dallas. TOD in these smaller urban communities is helping to create unique downtowns designed to attract growth that would otherwise go to the sprawling regional fringe areas.

The market for TOD is continuing to expand nationally. Dallas area real-estate market data shows between 1997 and 2001, residential properties near high frequency transit lines appreciated 39 percent more than properties further away from rail. For office properties, land-value premiums were even higher at 53 percent. The key for successful TOD in the Dallas area is to implement “transit oriented” rather than “transit adjacent” development. A leading example is the Mockingbird Station Redevelopment Project, reflecting an urban-styled, mixed-use village. The project includes 211 loft residences, 140,000 square feet of office space, and 180,000 square feet of restaurants, entertainment, and destination shopping, situated on 7 acres.

Boston, MA – Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Boston’s built form, characterized by a pedestrian orientation; an intertwining of business, retail, and residential buildings; and close access to public transportation, highlights successful TOD in the area. The City’s approach to TOD is unique as a result, with a focus on maintaining the City’s historically transit-oriented urban fabric. The City of Boston has sought to strengthen transit’s presence by using regulations, incentives, and other tools.

The Ashmont Station mixed-use development project includes first floor retail and 100 units of affordable housing on an under-utilized 30,000 square foot parking lot located at the terminus or the rapid transit line, trolley line, and regional bus station. Since this is a walk-in station, the existing barren parking lot was an eyesore and served to interrupt the streetscape. By developing ground floor retail with housing above, the streetscape will be reconnected and improve pedestrian connections to the station. New retail space will enhance and solidify the commercial aspects of the Square; while the much needed affordable housing will provide new riders to the transit system and customers for the retail space.

Portland, OR – Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (TRI-Met)
TOD planning is linked inextricably in the Portland region. The Portland region’s sustained commitment to TOD is part of its well-documented and vigorous pursuit of Smart Growth development. The Center Commons project represents a very successful mixed-income and for-sale housing on a single site, and is the first infill TOD project in the city. Funding for the project included low-income housing tax credits, State of Oregon tax-exempt bonds, a PDC loan, a Fannie Mae loan, general partner equity, and a Federal Transit Authority TOD grant. Additionally the project received a 10-year property-tax exemption.
TOD Implementation Strategies
The following are strategies each community has taken to support TOD development.

- The City of Dallas created a TOD overlay zone and is considering additional incentives to support TOD.
- The City of Boston TOD strategies include: requiring transportation mitigation plans with approval; encouraging new developments to improve and incorporate adjacent transit access facilities and stations; using economic development funds to increase police presence around station areas, encouraging private investment in surrounding residential buildings, and consolidating and marketing foreclosed properties for TOD, especially in targeted redevelopment areas.
- The City of Portland's key TOD strategy calls for two-thirds of jobs and 40 percent of households to be located in and around transit-served centers and corridors by 2040. In addition, Portland’s core station area objectives include: rezoning the influence area around stations to allow only transit-supporting uses; recognizing station areas as special places, whereas remaining community is available for traditional development; promoting TOD as part of broader growth management strategy; focusing public agency investment and planning at station areas having the greatest development opportunity; and building a broad-based core of support for TOD with elected officials, local government staff, land owners, and neighborhoods.

Establishing Roles
Successful TOD requires a team effort, involving municipal leadership that invests time, money, and political capital to achieve TOD, sophisticated, TOD-savvy developers, and extensive public outreach.

A significant role of leadership is helping to make projects work financially. This should include implementation of TOD policy by creating zoning that allows for more density and mixed-use; making infrastructure improvements (most notably in public transit); and providing predictability and transparency in the form of plans, guidelines, and permissible uses and densities.

TOD Development
Some lessons learned with respect to successful TOD development include:

- Pay more attention to the programming aspect of the project to ensure success of the retail and community uses. For example, identify local businesses that would be appropriate for the project, offer reduced rent for a period of time to assist them getting started.
- Place retail along the street front, with direct access to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Retailing follows rooftops, even in a transit corridor setting. Retailers and developers look at the amount and mix of housing nearby a TOD.
- The promotion of TOD on urban infill parcels creates an important opportunity for the revitalization of older existing development areas. If designed right, TOD can provide a sense of place, gathering places, open spaces, and community resources.

For More information
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority website: www.gcrta.org

Related Sections
- Transportation
- High Performing Community
BUILDING REHABILITATION CODE

Innovative Organization: State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

Like Fort Collins, many communities in New Jersey see the potential and advantages in re-using and adapting older buildings for new purposes. Yet New Jersey communities faced obstacles with bringing such buildings into compliance with state building codes.

Innovative Practice

New Jersey Uniform Construction Code – Rehabilitation Subcode

The most significant recent reform in the regulation of work in existing buildings happened in New Jersey with the adoption of the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code—Rehabilitation Subcode in January 1998. The new subcode was developed because it was recognized that the then current code was constraining the re-use of older buildings in New Jersey.

Three criteria were defined for the new system in New Jersey:

- Timeliness of processing and enforcement (i.e., most projects should be handled routinely rather than as special cases).
- Predictability (i.e., people should know the law applicable to them and be free from arbitrary treatment).
- Reasonableness (i.e., provide a reasonable level of safety without imposing excessive additional costs).

The Rehabilitation Subcode that was developed to meet these criteria reflected a true paradigm shift in the regulation of alteration work in existing buildings. It takes the rather broad building code definition of “alteration” and splits it into three well-defined categories of work in progressive increase of complexity:

- Renovation—defined in general as work involving no reconfiguration of spaces in the building.
- Alteration—defined in general as work involving reconfiguration of spaces.
- Reconstruction—defined as work so extensive that the work area cannot be occupied during the work.

Another element of the paradigm shift was the creation and definition of the term “work area.” Both innovations go a long way toward achieving predictability and reasonableness. Progressively more complex rehabilitation work entails progressively more extensive additional required life safety improvements. Reasonableness is achieved by establishing proportionality between the voluntary work proposed by the owner and the additional work imposed by the regulatory system.

The Rehabilitation Subcode’s approach to change of occupancy in an existing building parallels that of the UCBC. Multiple hazard scales are established, and a change of occupancy that involves an increase in hazard on one or more of the scales triggers specific additional requirements to address the added hazard.

The Rehabilitation Subcode is serving its purpose. The State reports that investment in building rehabilitation in cities such as Trenton, Newark, and Elizabeth has increased substantially from 1997-1998 due to the new code.

Background and Details

New Jersey’s Rehabilitation Subcode was developed by the Department of Community Affairs with guidance from a 30-member committee under the coordination of the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University. The committee was composed of code officials, fire officials, architects, historic preservationists, advocates for people with disabilities, and government representatives. The committee met over two years and approved the draft document at its final meeting on January 31, 1997. Department staff then made the draft a proposal, which was published in the New Jersey Register on August 18, 1997. Two public hearings...
were held. Comments were received and discussed, and some clarifications and improvements to the proposed documents were made. Signed on December 8, 1997, the Rehabilitation Subcode was published as a rule adoption in the New Jersey Register on January 5, 1998.

The Department of Community Affairs made this extraordinary effort to provide training for code officials in advance of the promulgation of the rule because of a strong belief that code knowledge leads to effective enforcement. However, the Rehabilitation Subcode, with its categories of work and specific requirements, provides the code user with guidelines that are easily followed. There is virtually no guesswork involved in applying the code.

New Jersey’s Rehabilitation Subcode is an example of government reassessing its regulations and actually improving the effectiveness of the regulations by imposing fewer and more sensible requirements on the public. Building departments win because buildings are improved and made safer. Building owners win because they are able to improve their properties, increase their value, and produce buildings in which people want to live and work. But, most importantly, the public wins because urban areas are revitalized, open space is preserved, resources are conserved and, in general, quality of life is improved.

**For More information**

State of New Jersey Rehabilitation Subcode website:  
http://www.state.nj.us/dca/codes/rehab/pioneerart.shtml

A Guide to Smart Codes in Your Community:  

HousingPolicy.Org Toolbox:  
http://www.housingpolicy.org/toolbox/strategy/policies/rehab_codes.html?tierid=70

**Related Sections**

- Economic Health
- High Performing Community
ZONING CODE REFORM

Innovative Community: Denver, Colorado
Population: 600,000

Denver is not similar to Fort Collins in terms of its demographics, but as a mature community it is also wrestling with how to address redevelopment in established neighborhoods and corridors.

Innovative Practice

Revised Zoning Code
Denver is undertaking major revisions to its 53-year-old zoning code with a focus on supporting a growing economy, sustainable environment, diverse mix of housing, strong neighborhoods, and a high quality of life. The project is applicable to Fort Collins as the community debates infill and redevelopment policies in the Plan Fort Collins project. The focus on form of buildings and layout are important in redeveloping areas in order to address the context established by existing development and street patterns.

Background and Details
The zoning code update process is taking place in four phases:

1. Analysis and Problem Definition;
2. Alternative Approaches;
3. Drafting; and
4. Public Review.

The second phase is resulting in an innovative “context-based” approach to zoning, organized around six different contexts. These characteristics are derived from the existing and desirable characteristics of Denver’s diverse neighborhoods.

This context-based approach provides a broader range of zoning categories than is currently available and will guide more compatible future development. The new Zoning Code also uses a form-based approach that clearly explains what can be built in terms of such things as building height and placement using visuals.

The six contexts include Suburban, Urban Edge, Urban, General Urban, Urban Center and Downtown. Each of the contexts is described by specific block patterns, commercial and residential uses, and transportation characteristics.

The code revision has undergone extensive public review and modification. Code sections consist of general character, street/block/access patterns, building placement and location, building height, mobility, design standards and zone districts. While still containing permissible uses, the focus is on the form of the types of housing and non-residential buildings. The draft code contains extensive drawings of building dimensions and lot/block layouts along with design element text.

For More information
Denver New Zoning Code website: www.newcodedenver.org/rezoning

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- High Performing Community
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACQUISITION FUND

Innovative Community: Denver, Colorado
Population: 598,707

The City and County of Denver is located at the center of the largest metropolitan area in Colorado. Regionally, the introduction and expansion of light rail transit has led to major shifts in land use patterns, with development becoming more transit-oriented to take advantage of the transit service.

Innovative Practice

Transit-Oriented Development Acquisition Fund for Affordable Housing
The City and County of Denver has partnered with the Urban Land Conservancy, Enterprise Community Partners, and other investors to establish the first affordable housing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) acquisition fund in the country. The purpose of the Denver TOD Fund is to support the creation and preservation of over 1,000 affordable housing units through strategic property acquisition in current and future transit corridors. As the Denver metropolitan area undergoes what is considered to be the largest expansion of a transit system in the nation, this new investment will help preserve and create affordable housing within one half mile of rail service and a quarter mile from frequent bus routes.

Background and Details

Benefits of the Fund
The current fund will revolve to make up to $25 million in capital available to purchase and hold sites for up to five years in anticipation of the opening of new transit stations. The investment of $25 million will leverage over $100 million in local economic development activity, serving many of Denver’s lowest income neighborhoods with construction and permanent job creation. The Fund will also directly benefit low-income households that on average spend 60 percent of their gross income on housing and transportation expenses combined. By controlling these expenses and providing access to quality, environmentally-sustainable housing, the TOD Fund will make it possible for families to build wealth, and access employment and educational opportunities; it will provide employers with access to an expanded workforce.

Partnerships
The partnership of government, quasi-governmental organizations, banks, nonprofits and foundations is a critical component of the Denver TOD Fund. Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit, assembled the initial $15 million in capital that will allow the Fund to begin operations in mid-2009. The Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) committed the initial $1.5 million equity to the Fund and will lead real estate acquisition, management and disposition of assets for the Fund. ULC is a nonprofit organization formed in 2003 by local business leaders who understood the need to permanently secure real estate assets for community benefit in metro Denver’s urban neighborhoods.

Enterprise will serve as fund manager, responsible for managing and servicing the fund, and identifying all sources of funding to capitalize the fund. Currently, ULC is expected to be the sole borrower of the fund and will be responsible for property acquisition and establishing partnerships with local partners for site redevelopment. ULC will target three types of properties: existing federally-assisted rental properties; unsubsidized rental properties that are currently affordable for 60 percent area median income population; and vacant or commercial properties with desirable locations for the development of new affordable housing. The TOD Fund will enable the ULC to hold properties for up to five years, providing maximum flexibility to
secure long-term subsidies to preserve existing rental housing. ULC plans to increase density on many sites by adding affordable housing and commercial development.

As the administrator of the City’s affordable housing approach, the Denver Office of Economic Development (OED) will serve as the lead agency representing the City on the fund. The Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships (DOSP) played a lead role in managing the City financing for the fund and in initiating the application requests. Joining OED and DOSP to work on this effort are the Department of Community Planning and Development and Denver Human Services—Denver’s Road Home, the Mayor’s Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

**City of Denver Role**
The City of Denver has two sources of money capital that it is using as an investment. The Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships, through its Xcel Energy Franchise dollars, is investing $2 million in the fund. The Office of Economic Development is also contributing $500,000. The City’s dollars are in the top loss position within the fund. The investment of the Xcel Energy Franchise dollars will ensure that the housing units built will meet Enterprise Green Community Standards and around 15% of the units will be affordable at a 0 – 30% Area Median Income level (per an established goal). A representative from the Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships and a representative from the Office of Economic Development also serve on the TOD Fund Oversight Committee.

**Investors**
Current Fund Investors include the City of Denver, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, Enterprise Community Partners, MacArthur Foundation, Mile High Community Loan Fund, and the Rose Community Foundation.

**For More information**
City of Denver website:  

Denver Office of Economic Development website:  
The City of Portland is Oregon’s most populous city in the northwest. The City represents the heart of the larger metropolitan area of Portland/Vancouver Washington, with an estimated population of over two million people. As with many communities struggling to meet the housing needs of all segments of the population, the continued development of affordable housing is a key issue in Portland.

Innovative Practice

Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing
The Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Set Aside is a policy adopted by the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and Portland City Council that requires PDC to spend a minimum percentage of its total tax increment resources in urban renewal areas (URA) on eligible affordable housing activities. The TIF set aside ensures that a certain amount of funding will be available for housing as part of overall urban renewal efforts in 9 of Portland’s 11 URAs. There are guidelines for each URA about how this funding should be spent to meet the citywide housing priorities. Approximately $120 million was forecasted to be available from the program’s inception in 2007 through 2011, potentially resulting in 1,200 to 4,000 new and rehabilitated affordable housing units (both rental apartments and owner-occupied homes).

Background and Details
On April 26, 2006, the City Council expressed an interest in considering a policy “to dedicate a percentage of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues from all Urban Renewal Districts citywide to an affordable housing set aside fund, or to create another mechanism to ensure predictable and adequate funding and prioritization of housing for individuals and families earning 80% Median Family Income (MFI) or less.” Council also requested the Portland Development Commission work in partnership with the Bureau of Housing and Community Development, the Office of Management and Finance, the Housing and Community Development Commission, Affordable Housing Now, and other interested stakeholders to develop and present to Council by September 2006 either an implementation plan to create such a set aside fund or other options.

The PDC Commission directed staff to create and implement a broad and inclusive public participation effort, consistent with PDC’s Public Participation Policy, which reflects perspectives from individuals and groups, including Urban Renewal Advisory Committees, involved in all aspects of tax increment financing, and other stakeholders who would benefit or would be impacted by a specific set or automatic allocation of urban renewal resources for affordable housing.

Tax Increment Expenditure Data Report
A Technical Advisory Committee was established to review PDC’s historic information on affordable housing expenditures in the existing URAs as well as developing projections regarding future expenditures. The Technical Advisory Committee was charged with assisting with the Data Report on Historical and Forecasted Urban Renewal Expenditures.

TIF Set Aside Implementation Plan
A Project Advisory Group was established to review the data report from the technical advisory committee and discuss implementation options. The Project Advisory Group was charged with assisting with the development of TIF Set Aside Implementation Recommendations. The Group met three times and provided input to PDC staff in the development of the Implementation Plan. A public forum cosponsored by PDC and HCDC was held to allow for broad community input into the development of the Implementation Plan.

In October both the PDC Board of Commissioners and the City Council adopted the TIF Set Aside Implementation Plan which established a 30% set aside in the new districts and South Park Blocks Urban Renewal Area, and includes separate percentages for Downtown Waterfront Urban Renewal Area, Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal Area and the Central Eastside Urban Renewal Area.

TIF Set Aside Income Guidelines
The Implementation Plan included PDC’s intent to establish income guidelines that correspond to individual URA Housing Policies, current projects,
per unit subsidies, and forecasted budget availability. PDC met with urban renewal advisory committees and stakeholder groups, as well as citywide stakeholder and advocacy groups to get input on the Preliminary Staff Recommendation for Income Guidelines. PDC hosted a public forum in January 2007, which was attended by over 60 community representatives ranging from URA representatives, neighborhood representatives, affordable housing developers and advocacy groups, homeownership advocates, community organizations and real estate professionals. On February 28, 2007, the PDC Board of Commissioners formally adopted Income Guidelines for the TIF Set Aside.

For More information

Housing Services Tax Increment Financing Housing Set Aside website: http://www.pdc.us/housing_services/programs/financial/tif_setaside.asp


Related Sections

- Economic Health
- High Performing Community
Safety and Wellness Best Practices

OVERVIEW

The best practice case studies within this section address innovations in emergency preparedness, improving neighborhood engagement, access to locally produced foods, and integrating health and wellness topics into a comprehensive plan. The safety and wellness best practice case studies are:

- **Emergency Preparedness** – Austin, Texas
- **Local Food Production and Access** – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- **Neighborhood and Community Engagement** – Gainesville, Florida
- **Incorporating Health and Wellness Topics** – Marin County, California

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

As the planning process progresses additional research of other innovative organizations and ideas may be necessary. Additional ideas for safety and wellness best practices include:

**Organizations and Programs**

- Overland Park, Kansas Police Department;
- Lakewood, Colorado Police Department;
- Coral Springs, Florida;
- Boston, Massachusetts’ Department of Transitional Assistance;
- Larimer Center for Mental Health and the Health District of Larimer County Connections Partnership;
- Northern Front Range Continuum of Care;
- Michigan’s Promoting Active Communities (PAC) Program;
- North Carolina’s Prevention Partners Program;
- Wellness Council of America’s Well Cities Program;
- Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County;
- United Way of Larimer County Pathways Past Poverty’s Poverty Simulations;
- National Project Homeless Connect; and
- Ingham County, Michigan’s Health Impact Planning Matrix.

**Innovative Practices**

- Coordinated health and human service provider meetings;
- Enhanced farmers’ market offerings, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), programs, and community gardens;
- Investments in children’s welfare and development (many European nations);
- Sliding-scale fees for child care (Boulder, Colorado);
- Food policy guidance for City events and healthy foods strategic pricing at vending machines;
- Partnerships between youth and seniors at community gardens;
- Substance abuse and tobacco prevention programs and education; and
- Transportation services to regional health and human service providers.
The City of Austin, Texas emphasizes the importance in being a safe and prepared community through a variety of public programs.

**Innovative Practice**

**Emergency Preparedness**
The City of Austin Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) works with every City department to prepare for the inevitable disaster before it strikes. Advanced preparation helps keep the community resilient—saving lives, property, time, money, and resources.

**Background and Details**
The City of Austin management and leaders place great value in the community’s safety and preparedness for emergencies, as evidenced through dedication of staffing and allocation of resources to the HESM office. The City’s disaster resistance and preparedness for emergencies is built through a series of coordinated efforts that include planning, exercises, mitigation, and public education. These activities are described below.

**Planning**
The development of an extensive strategic plan (currently underway in 2010) and strategic plan template will allow the City to better address threats and acts of terrorism, as well as natural and manmade disasters. The template will be available to other emergency management organizations. The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is responsible for overseeing the development of the Plan Update for the City of Austin.

Additionally, a citywide Emergency Operations Plan has been developed to identify hazards, assess vulnerabilities, and prioritize actions to reduce losses.

**Exercises**
The City recognizes that plans will not work unless they are tested and used, so the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management regularly coordinates and participates in a number of preparedness exercises. These range from small tabletop drills to full-scale community exercises with response vehicles and actors. After a drill, participating agencies evaluate the results and discuss improvements to the plans that were tested.

**Mitigation**
The City of Austin implements many hazard mitigation activities designed to eliminate, reduce, or postpone the impact of future disasters. Reducing the physical, financial, and emotional losses caused by disasters is critical to speeding up recovery and maintaining the sustainability of the community. Some mitigation activities that the City of Austin has implemented include:

- Research,
- Warning and monitoring,
- Building standards,
- Development regulations,
- Capital improvement projects (CIPs), and
- Land and property acquisition.

**Education**
The City also provides comprehensive disaster education programs that focus on preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

**For More information**
City of Austin Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management website:
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/site/public_safety_portal.htm

**Related Sections**
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- High Performing Community
LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND ACCESS

Innovative Community: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Population: 1.54 million

As with many communities throughout the nation, Philadelphia strives to address issues such as childhood obesity and nutrition, and seeks widespread access to safe and healthy food.

Innovative Practices

Increasing Local Food Production and Access to Healthy Foods: The Food Trust

The Food Trust, a local nonprofit organization founded in 1992, started by conducting nutrition education classes for inner-city children at Reading Terminal Market, the century-old farmers' market located in the center of Philadelphia. After the Trust opened its first farmers' market at Tasker Homes, a public housing development in southwest Philadelphia, the organization began working with communities to develop lasting and stable sources of affordable foods. The Food Trust focuses on two primary areas; school-based and community-based programs. Several examples are described in the section below.

Background and Details

School-Based Nutrition Policy

In 2003, The Food Trust developed a Comprehensive School Nutrition Policy for the School District of Philadelphia to help youth attain their full educational potential and good health by providing them with the skills, social support and environmental reinforcement needed to adopt long-term healthy eating habits. The policy is based upon guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control. The Comprehensive School Nutrition Policy Initiative reduces the number of children who are overweight by 50 according to the Journal of Pediatrics.

Healthy Community Store Initiative

In communities that lack supermarkets, families depend on corner stores for food purchases. The choices at these stores are often limited to packaged foods and very little, if any, fresh produce. Corner stores are also a frequent destination for children, many of whom stop daily on the way to and from school for snacks – adding about 610 calories to a child's diets each day.

In partnership with these communities, The Food Trust developed the Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HSCI) to increase the availability of healthy foods in corner stores and to educate young people about healthy snacking.

Greening Grocery

The Green Supermarket/Grocery Initiative is a comprehensive program to bring more fresh food into communities by leveraging the energy-saving power of environmentally sustainable building practices to make carrying fresh food economically feasible. The Initiative builds on the work of The Food Trust's Corner Store and Supermarket Campaigns.

The Program has three main components:

- Prototype and Strategies
- Demonstration Project
- Policy Recommendations

For More information

The Food Trust website: [http://www.thefoodtrust.org](http://www.thefoodtrust.org)

Related Sections

- Community and Neighborhood Livability
**NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**Innovative Community:** Gainesville, Florida  
**Population:** 125,904

Gainesville is a town similar in size to Fort Collins and home to the University of Florida.

**Innovative Practices**

**Neighborhood Improvement and Engagement**

Gainesville is a city of beautiful urban neighborhoods, ranging from five downtown historic districts, to mid-century heritage neighborhoods near the University of Florida, to more suburban neighborhoods with canopy trees and abundant vegetation. The City’s Neighborhood Improvement Division provides innovative programs and services to improve Gainesville neighborhoods, including neighborhood planning, a registration program to keep neighborhoods apprised of development activity, and homeownership and housing improvement initiatives.

**Background and Details**

With support from the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission and federal funding from the Community Development Block Grant program, the city’s Neighborhood Improvement Division offers a variety of tools intended to improve homes and neighborhoods:

**Neighborhood Planning**

The City’s Neighborhood Planning staff works with individual neighborhoods to develop neighborhood action plans and to assist in implementing the plans. The City has a program of neighborhood planning grants for participating neighborhoods.

**Registered Neighborhoods Program**

Registered neighborhoods receive advance notice of any proposed developments in the city over certain size thresholds, and developers must hold an advance neighborhood meeting prior to submitting a development application with the City.

**Housing Division Programs**

The City of Gainesville Housing Division offers a comprehensive housing program designed to improve the quality of life for the very low, low, and moderate income citizens of the City of Gainesville. These programs include the following:

- Homeownership initiatives
- Neighborhood Impact Programs
- Housing Services
- Housing Rehabilitation

**“Good Neighbor” Program for Rental Housing**

The city publishes a rental housing brochure to inform tenants and landlords of basic responsibilities. This includes information on noise, yard maintenance, trash, parking of vehicles, unrelated persons occupancy requirements, and other topics that are covered by city ordinances.

**For More Information**

City of Gainesville Neighborhood Improvement Division website:  
[http://www.cityofgainesville.org/GOVERNMENT/CityDepartmentsNZ/NeighborhoodPlanning/tabid/305/Default.aspx](http://www.cityofgainesville.org/GOVERNMENT/CityDepartmentsNZ/NeighborhoodPlanning/tabid/305/Default.aspx)

City of Gainesville Rental Housing Brochure:  

**Related Sections**

- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- High Performing Community
INCORPORATING HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOPICS

Innovative Community: Marin County, California
Population: 248,000

Marin County, California is located in the North San Francisco Bay Area, across the Golden Gate Bridge from the City of San Francisco. The County is known for its visionary planning efforts, including strong commitments to all elements of community sustainability.

Innovative Practices

Promoting Community Health and Wellness in the General Plan
Marin County has adopted a new general plan that emphasizes "sustainable communities", and could serve as a model for other jurisdictions. Rather than prepare a separate green building element or sustainability chapter, Marin County planners made an overarching community sustainability ethic the basis for nearly every goal, objective and policy in the plan, and focused extensively on community health and well-being. The Socioeconomic Element of the Countywide Plan focuses on the people of Marin County and seeks to reinforce the complex connections between individual well-being, economic prosperity, community involvement, cultural richness, and the environment.

Background and Details
The County Plan’s Socioeconomic Element focuses extensively on community safety and well-being, with sections that address child care, public safety, diversity, education, and public health. The County’s General Plan website also includes an interactive “Plan Viewer” that tracks a set of indicators for multiple aspects of the plan, including several related to community health and safety. The following is a brief summary of key safety and wellness policies and concepts contained within the plan:

Child Care
Adequate child care is an essential component of the Marin social and economic fabric, and demand significantly exceeds the capacity of licensed providers. Policies and programs intended to ease this shortage include:
- Streamline permitting for child care facilities;
- Evaluate and determine how to expedite the permitting process for large family day care homes and child care facilities; and
- Modify regulations to explicitly encourage development of child care facilities.

Public Safety
The plan addresses a wide variety of public safety elements, including the following:
- Crime prevention and neighborhood safety; and
- Decrease crime, including child abuse and neglect, elder and dependent abuse and neglect, domestic violence, juvenile offenses, physical and financial abuse of seniors.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness
The plan addresses emergency and disaster preparedness topics including earthquakes, fires, and weather-related events;

Diversity
The plan encourages and celebrates diversity and cultivating a rich community fabric by supporting populations that have traditionally been underrepresented, including measures such as enhancing multilingual/multicultural capacity; promoting diversity in the workforce, and promoting leadership in minority communities.

Education
The plan directs attention to policies and programs dealing with inequities based on income, geography, and race, and assisting with school planning to determine appropriate locations and layouts for future facilities.

Public Health
The plan focuses its efforts on access to health care, and on promoting healthy lifestyles through access to healthy foods and physical activity.
For More information

Marin Countywide Plan Viewer website: http://marin.visiblestrategies.com

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- Transportation
- High Performing Community
Culture, Parks, and Recreation Best Practices

**OVERVIEW**

The best practice case studies within this section highlight innovative programs and practices related to the integration of arts and economic development initiatives, local and regional arts and culture collaborations, and the formation of a park district. The culture, parks, and recreation best practice case studies are:

- **Arts and Economic Integration** – Austin, Texas
- **Arts Development** – Riverside, California
- **Regional Arts and Culture Coordination** – Portland, Oregon
- **Local Arts Collaborations** – Santa Fe, New Mexico
- **Park District Formation** – Aurora, Illinois

**ADDITIONAL IDEAS**

Additional research of other organizations and ideas may be helpful as the community discusses preferred directions and possible implementation actions. Some additional ideas for culture, parks, and recreation best practices and implementation strategies include:

**Organizations and Programs**

- Chattanooga, Tennessee’s arts community;
- Chesterfield County, Virginia’s partnership between local business and recreation programs;
- City of Omaha’s Art in Public Places Program;
- Community Foundation of Northern Colorado partnerships (possibly to develop long-term arts and culture funding options); and
- Mt. Vernon, Indiana chalk the walk program.

**Innovative Practices**

- Formation of a science and cultural facilities district around key arts and culture destinations (e.g., Denver, Colorado);
- Sponsoring and advertising in parks and recreation facilities (e.g., Larimer County, Colorado, Highland Park, Illinois, and Broward County, Florida);
- Regional recreation attractions to support park system operations and maintenance (e.g., Highland Hills Water World in Denver, Colorado);
- Partnerships between agencies for youth and senior recreational facilities and programming;
- Creation of thematic cultural districts or destinations (e.g., Asian, Middle Eastern themes); and
- Park and recreation facility rentals for events and festivals.
ARTS AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Innovative Community: Austin, Texas
Population: 757,688

Austin is the cultural and economic center of the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metropolitan area. Like Fort Collins, Austin values integration of arts, culture and creativity into all aspects of community life.

Innovative Practices

Arts and Economic Integration
The City of Austin recognizes the importance of arts and culture as an indispensable resource for civic vitality and prosperity. A recent study rated the impact of the cultural sector in Austin: $2.2 billion in annual economic activity, 44,000 jobs, and $48 million generated in City tax revenue.

The Cultural Arts Division (CAD) of the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office provides leadership and management for the City’s cultural arts programs and for the development of arts and cultural industries as an economic development strategy on behalf of the City. The Cultural Arts Division is responsible for the Cultural Arts Funding Programs, Art in Public Places Program, community-based arts development, and programs to assist the development of music, film and creative industries in Austin, as well as initiatives designed to support and encourage the community’s unique cultural identity and vitality.

Background and Details

Leading by Example at City Hall
Austin City Hall was designed to promote public participation and interaction with local government as well as engaging in Austin’s diverse cultural arts. City Hall is always right in the middle of the action of Austin’s huge downtown cultural events like Art City Austin, and City Hall provides many avenues for artistic expression through art, music and performance activities day and night, including:

- Live music performance by a local musician or band in the Council Chambers at each City Council Meeting;
- Free “Live from the Plaza” concerts feature a local band every Friday at noon;
- An extensive art exhibition in the atrium and open areas of the first three floors; and
- Video screens in the lobby allow visitors to select short films which highlight Austin’s unique sense of place and diverse cultural identity and showcase the creative talent of Central Texas filmmakers.

Cultural Plan
In order to assure that Austin remains a hotbed of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial energy, the City initiated a community-wide dialogue about the future of the arts and cultural development (something that had not occurred since the early 90s). The dialogue was transformed into a concrete action plan for future cultural development to be implemented by the whole community over the next 5 to 10 years. The concrete action plan is called Create Austin, the City’s Cultural Plan. The cultural plan maps out Austin’s arts and cultural assets, needs, opportunities, resources, and priorities to help create strategies and action plans for the community to further develop the cultural sector.

Cultural Arts Funding and Support
Austin City government recognizes that music is one of the things that makes the community special, and it translates into millions of dollars annually. The City’s official slogan became "Live Music Capital of the World" by City Council resolution on Aug. 29, 1991. The City also has several programs to help musicians and promote their music, such as the Austin music television and live City Council performances.

The City of Austin’s Cultural Arts Division offers the Take it to the Next Level professional development
workshops to enhance the management capacity of nonprofit creative organizations and to grow jobs, wealth, and the economic impact of the creative economy. Workshop topics are identified by surveying previous participants to respond to the needs of the creative sector.

The City of Austin was the first municipality in Texas to make a commitment to include works of art in construction projects when it established the Art in Public Places program in 1985. By ordinance, 2% of budgets are allocated to commission or purchase art for public sites such as the airport, convention center, libraries, parks, police stations, recreation centers, and streetscapes.

Additionally, the City of Austin established a Creative Industries Loan Guarantee Program to help individuals, companies, and nonprofits involved in music, film, art, and technology.

For More Information

City of Austin Website:
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/redevelopment/cad.htm

Related Sections

- Economic Health
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- High Performing Community
ARTS DEVELOPMENT

Innovative Community: Riverside, CA
Population: 300,430

Named for its location beside the Santa Ana River, Riverside is the largest city in the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metropolitan areas of Southern California – also known as the “Inland Empire,” it is located approximately 60 miles east of Los Angeles. The University of California, Riverside is located in the northeastern part of the City. The City’s official slogan is “City of Arts and Innovation.”

Innovative Practices

Arts Development
In 2006, the City Council formed the new Arts & Cultural Affairs Division (ACAD) within the City’s Development Department for the purpose of advancing the Mayor and City Council’s vision to make Riverside the identified center for arts, culture, education and entertainment in the Inland Empire. This designation has become the City’s focus primarily due to innovative decision making and branding, since Riverside does not have a long-standing history of art or innovation.

Background and Details
ACAD provides support and creates local, regional and national partnerships with the many Riverside arts and cultural institutions, including the Smithsonian Institution among others.

Key Objectives and Responsibilities
ACAD is guided by its mission, which is to champion and advance Riverside as the “City of Arts & Innovation” in the broadest economic and social context possible. The department motto is “Together we all work to provide access to the diversity of art and culture in Riverside!” Key objectives and responsibilities of the ACDC are:

- Enhancing the quality of life for residents of and visitors to the City of Riverside;
- Helping to build a strong local economy through arts and culture;
- Planning, developing, and overseeing City of Riverside arts programs and cultural activities;
- Developing and managing the City’s arts policy, grants, and sponsorships;
- Serving as the City’s arts and cultural affairs representative with local, county, and state arts agencies, local arts ad-hoc coalitions, corporations civic groups, and artists;
- Providing guidance to community partner organizations to promote a cohesive and sophisticated artistic and cultural environment;
- Promoting the City’s participation in arts and cultural affairs programs locally, regionally, statewide, nationally and internationally;
- Producing or assisting with City-wide special events;
- Coordinating City-wide Special Event permits;
- Negotiating and managing contracts for the City’s arts and cultural facilities, including the Fox Performing Arts Center, the Municipal Auditorium, the Visitors Center, and the Riverside Convention Center; and
- Overseeing City-wide filming rights, productions, and revenue-generation.

For More information
City of Riverside Development Department – Arts and Cultural Affairs website:
http://www.riversideca.gov/arts/

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- High Performing Community
REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE COORDINATION

Innovative Community: Portland, Oregon
Population: 582,130

Portland has a strong arts and culture program, recognized nationally for its highly supported public/private arts programs and facilities. Like Fort Collins, Portland faces challenges with continued resourcing and funding of arts and culture objectives – specifically funding for arts and music education and for large public performance facilities.

Innovative Practices

Regional Arts & Culture Council
Through vision, leadership, and service, the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) works to integrate arts and culture in all aspects of community life. RACC is the steward of several public and private investments in arts and culture, and works to create an environment in which the arts and culture of the region can flourish and prosper.

Background and Details

Funding
RACC has served the Portland tri-county area since its inception in 1995, when the city’s Metropolitan Arts Commission transitioned into a separate not-for-profit organization based upon the recommendation of ArtsPlan 2000+. RACC is funded by local, regional, state and federal governments to provide grants to artists and operating support to art organizations in the tri-county region. Funders include the City of Portland, Metro, and Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties, the Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Cultural Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Key Service Areas
RACC provides service in five key areas:

- Through advocacy, RACC helps build support for a strong arts and culture community.
- RACC grants provide artists and arts organizations with financial support.
- The nationally-acclaimed public art program integrates a wide range of art in public places. RACC manages Percent for Art programs for the City of Portland and Multnomah County.
- RACC provides other community services, including workshops for artists, organizational consulting, and a variety of printed and electronic resources.
- RACC supports arts education by directly funding artist’s residencies in schools and is working on a comprehensive solution to provide integrated Arts Education learning for every student in the region.

Other programs include public art walking tours, public art murals program, and permanent and temporary public art displays. RACC is the designated regional partner in the Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) Regional Arts Education Network which provides arts education services and information throughout the state.

Coordination with Other Efforts
Act for Art is the Creative Action Plan for the Portland Metropolitan region. RACC was integral to the Act for Art effort, in conjunction with the Creative Advocacy Network (CAN – a broad coalition of arts organizations, businesses, government and individuals). Goals of the Act for Art Plan include:

- Strengthening cultural infrastructure by improving public funding, increasing private donations to help art spaces flourish;
- Improving access to the arts and arts education; and
- Investing in creative talent through direct support for artists, establishing networks, and promoting “buy local” initiatives.

For More information
Regional Arts & Culture Council website: www.racc.org
Creative Advocacy Network website: www.theartscan.org

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- High Performing Community
LOCAL ARTS COLLABORATION

Innovative Community: Santa Fe, New Mexico
Population: 72,056

The City of Santa Fe is the capital of the state of New Mexico and is the seat of Santa Fe County. Like Fort Collins, Santa Fe has earned a reputation as one of the best cities to live within the United States, ranking number two on the list in 2004. Santa Fe is well-known for using arts and culture as an economic catalyst – it is home to the nation’s second largest arts market with a $1.6 billion annual arts economy.

Innovative Practices

Local Arts Collaborations
Santa Fe is internationally known for its arts and culture programs, and is considered one of the most important art centers in the United States. Continued support for and coordination among the local arts community is important in order for the City to maintain its strong arts reputation. Successful promotional campaigns for the city and tourism organizations also depend on strong coordination among the local arts community.

The Santa Fe arts community stretches beyond the stereotypical image of Southwestern landscape painters and fine traditional Native American craftspeople and includes a broad group of nationally and internationally recognized artists including visual, performing, literary, culinary, Hispanic, and Native American artists. The arts community is supported and connected through a wide range of organizations – two of the larger local arts organizations are described in the next section.

Background and Details

Santa Fe Gallery Association
The Santa Fe Gallery Association is a professional organization of 103 galleries, dealers, museums and other members of the art community who form a vital contributing part of the social and economic life of Santa Fe. Members actively promote its diverse community and advance the business, artistic and educational interests of its members.

Santa Fe Art Institute
The Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI) was founded in 1985 by Pony Ault and the noted architect and artist William Lumpkins, both of whom sought to provide a unique opportunity for emerging artists to pursue a brief, intense period of study with critically acclaimed visiting artists. Today, the SFAI remains an independent, educational, nonprofit organization. SFAI has developed a wide range of programs aimed at serving artists at various stages of their careers and diverse audiences, including:

- Artists Lecture and Workshop Series – concept-based, multidisciplinary programs that run for eight months each year and include lectures, studio workshops, and exhibitions.
- Artist and writer residencies of one to three months duration, as well as emergency residency programs such as the New York City Emergency Artists Relief Program, which provided respite for 130 artists displaced by the tragic events of September 11.
- Ongoing education and outreach programs that bring the arts and arts education to underserved audiences in the greater Santa Fe area.
- Collaborations with institutions and organizations such as the Palace of the Governors, Museum of International Folk Art, PhotoArts Santa Fe, New Mexico School for the Deaf, and SITE Santa Fe, as well as with individuals representing a wide range of disciplines, further enhance programming and provide opportunities to engage the arts from a variety of perspectives.

For More Information
Santa Fe Gallery Association website: www.santafegalleryassociation.org
Santa Fe Art Institute Website: www.sfai.org

Related Sections
- Economic Health
PARKS DISTRICT FORMATION

Innovative Community: Aurora, Illinois
Population: 200,000 people

Park districts are common throughout the state of Illinois to fund parks and recreation maintenance, improvements, and expansions. The City of Aurora, Illinois was one of the later communities in the state to establish a park district. This is one unique way to commit to long-term funding for parks and recreation amenities and services.

Innovative Practice

The Fox Valley Park District in Aurora, Illinois was created in 1950 and is responsible for 2,500 acres of open space, 22 miles of river shoreline, 145 parks, 54 baseball fields, 36 soccer fields, 25 miles of trails, 81 playgrounds, 60 basketball courts, 29 tennis courts, 500,000 square feet of indoor recreation space, and one golf course. Fox Valley is the largest park district outside of Chicago in Illinois.

The District also has a “Fox Valley Park Foundation Inc.” that has the mission to aid the District in the acquisition, conservation, preservation and development of land and open space and to provide funds for youth enrichment recreation programs.

Background and Details

The Park District was created in 1947, due to the fact that no specific taxing entity existed for the improvement and expansion of recreational opportunities in Aurora before that time. The City owned several park properties, but ongoing maintenance and expansion was not possible until creation of the District. The Foundation was established in 1981 as a not-for-profit corporation to help benefit the District. The Foundation is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization.

The District is funded by 5% of the overall county property tax. The homeowner with a fair market value home of $200,000 will pay an estimated $257 to the District. While assessed valuations may periodically change, overall the District’s tax rate is expected to be stable.

In 2006, the District conducted public opinion research to determine public sentiments toward the District, parkland and facility needs assessment, and potential methods of funding and willingness to pay. The survey confirmed a high level of confidence and belief in the District’s ability to perform in fulfilling its mission. A six-year Open Space, Park and Recreation Investment Plan was developed that included a referendum funding of $44,850,000. On February 5, 2008, the District’s 2008 Referendum passed with 65% voter approval.

For More information

Fox Valley Park District website: http://www.foxvalleyparkdistrict.org

Related Sections

- Economic Health
- Safety and Wellness
- High Performing Community
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Transportation Best Practices

OVERVIEW

The case studies within this section address innovative transportation initiatives and sustainable practices. The transportation best practice case studies are:

- **Great Streets Initiative** – Washington D.C.
- **Sustainable Transportation Practices** - Kamloops, British Columbia

Additional best practice case studies related to transportation are currently being researched and will be added to this Report during the next phases of the planning process.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Additional research of other innovative transportation organizations and practices is ongoing. As identified during Phase 1 of the planning effort, some additional ideas for transportation best practices case studies and implementation strategies include:

**Organizations and Programs**

- Austin, Texas’ and Portland, Oregon’s mass transit infrastructure (e.g., bus rapid transit, downtown streetcars, etc.);
- Salt Lake City’s regional commuter transit;
- 34 Express (Greeley to Loveland) regional commuter bus and Denver to Colorado Springs’ former commuter bus service “lessons learned”;
- Rocky Mountain Rail Authority study of high speed rail along the Front Range and Interstate 70; and
- UniverCity Connections Transit and Mobility Task Force.

**Innovative Practices**

- Transit-oriented development (e.g. Denver, Colorado, and Bountiful, Utah);
- Use of incentives to reduce automobile emissions (e.g., Bangkok, Thailand);
- Adapting the transportation system to alternative and new vehicle types (e.g., electric, smaller sizes, etc.);
- Regional trail and transit planning and development; and
- Life cycle cost analysis of transportation system management (including construction, operations, and maintenance).
Great Streets Initiative

**Innovative Community**: Washington D.C.

**Population**: 600,000 (Due to commuters from surrounding suburbs, the city’s population rises to over one million during the work week.)

While much different in size and intensity than Fort Collins, Washington D.C. also values streets that are attractive, vibrant, accommodate multiple modes of transportation, and link together neighborhoods, community destinations, and employment areas.

**Innovative Practices**

**Great Streets Initiative**

Neighborhoods in the District of Columbia seek vibrant and distinct centers filled with proud merchants, well-maintained shops in attractive buildings, excited patrons, and supportive residents. These neighborhoods and others are linked by a series of major corridors that have significant potential to be "great streets" - places where people want to be.

The Great Streets Initiative is a multi-year, multiple-agency effort to transform nine under-invested corridors into thriving and inviting neighborhood centers using public actions and tools as needed to leverage private investment. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) has partnered with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Office of Planning (OP) to manage the program. More than $200 million is being invested in new mixed use development projects, storefront improvements, and transportation, streetscape, and transit improvements along these corridors.

In late January 2008, the District made available $95 million in targeted Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for neighborhood economic development projects which include over 10,000 square feet of quality local and national retail.

**Background and Details**

Washington D.C. has identified over 30 “great streets”, or corridors for targeted public investment. The goal of the city is to de-concentrate poverty, add affordable housing units, and create jobs and employment training programs. New Urbanism principles such as putting high density development at employment centers and transit nodes and introducing retail, cultural and entertainment facilities to enliven neighborhoods are key to the city’s actions. Locally, significant redevelopment opportunities include the Anacostia Waterfront, WMATA Metro Stations, and major transit corridors.

**Transportation, Land Use and Public Realm Plans**

These plans identify the vision for each corridor and act as implementation guides for public actions that can leverage private development. Examples of these plans include:

- Strategic development plans (business retention and expansion, affordable housing, balancing different travel modes);
- Transit studies and investment plans;
- Urban design projects; and
- Parking studies.

**Public and Private Partnerships and Investments**

The federal government, city, and private partners work to implement the shared vision on the variety of plans targeted towards “great streets.” Examples of the financial and infrastructure investments include:

- Small: business information centers, façade and signage grants;
- Medium: business expansion programs (reStore DC and Home Again attract large retailers), affordable housing in neighborhoods that need but cannot attract private investment
- Large: mixed-use private developments (zoning tools create incentives beyond tax breaks); and
- City-wide: Washington Nationals’ baseball stadium and Anacostia Waterfront development.

There have been challenges to this approach noted by the commercial real estate community. Additional public involvement in the development process has extended the construction timeline. This can lead to market shifts and cost increases that make the desired mixed-use project economically infeasible. However, realtors and developers have noted community features such as skating rinks, fountains, and grocery stores enhance the sense of community. There have also been concerns that the focus on mixed-use projects along the Great Streets is saturating the market in the area.
Funding Sources
The city has made $95 million in targeted TIF available for neighborhood economic development projects which include over 10,000 square feet of quality local and national retail. The federal government ($200 million), the District Department of Transportation ($100 million), and the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development ($16 million) have all invested in public improvements. The city also uses eminent domain as a tool to aid in redevelopment projects.

For More Information
Washington D.C., Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development website: http://dcbiz.dc.gov/dmped/cwp/view,a,1366,q,598874,dmpedNav||33026||33028|asp

Washington Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) website: http://www.crewdc.org/summary_June06.html

Related Sections
- Economic Health
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- Culture, Parks, and Recreation
Kamloops is a fast growing city of 85,000 in British Columbia’s southern interior and a major regional centre. Its diversified economy and high quality of life are expected to attract significant population growth, placing considerable strain on the existing road network and capital budget.

Innovative Practices

Sustainable Transportation Practices
The City of Kamloops promotes changes in travel behavior and encourages sustainable community development in order to minimize demands on the municipal transportation system and budget. In response to rapid growth and cost concerns about developing additional road capacity, Kamloops launched an integrated land use and transportation planning program called TravelSmart. By blending and balancing transportation supply and demand management, TravelSmart has helped reduce planned capital transportation expenditures nearly ten-fold, from $120 million down to $14 million.

Background and Details

TravelSmart was adopted as part of Kamloops Comprehensive Plan. Total project planning costs totaled $300,000, of which $245,000 was funded by the City and $55,000 by the province. The full program is funded through the City’s general revenue, development cost charges, the British Columbia (BC) Transportation Financing Authority, specific developers, and BC Transit.

TravelSmart directs growth to optimize use of existing transportation facilities as well as to make the most efficient use of any additional facilities that may be required in the future. The approach accommodates the realities of reduced municipal budgets and actively promotes more sustainable community design. Since its implementation, TravelSmart has also improved local air quality and reduced transportation-related energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. TravelSmart includes the following key components and initiatives:

- **Less expensive road structure alternatives.** To avoid expensive improvements to road networks, the City has slowed or halted development in some areas and identified underutilized arterial corridors for access to the downtown core.
- **Improved public transit.** A comprehensive transit plan was developed to improve the level of service and provide alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. Improvements include increased frequency of service to outlying communities and the use of smaller buses that feed into the main system.
- **Promoting bicycle use.** TravelSmart was the catalyst for developing the Kamloops Bicycle Plan which was completed in 2002. Among other things, the plan identifies and prioritizes over $6 million worth of bicycle route and facilities to be constructed over the next 20 years.
- **Promotional programs.** Transportation alternatives such as carpooling and biking are promoted through workshops and seminars in workplaces. Some of the programs include the "Safe Routes to School" program in schools and a "Go Green" advertising program for busy commuter streets.

Kamloops reports several "lessons learned" in the process. Among them are:

- **Use an incremental planning approach.** As a departure from conventional planning practices, an incremental or “learning by doing” approach to developing and implementing TravelSmart policies was important.
- **Budget appropriately.** Include a significant budget for public awareness and educational materials to encourage participation in less well know transportation demand management programs, such as employer-based trip reduction (e.g., ridesharing, guaranteed ride home), city-wide ride matching (matching commuters with common origins and destinations), alternative work arrangements.
(telecommuting, alternative work hours) and non-motorized transportation options (e.g., bike paths, pedestrian routes).

TravelSmart received both an FCM-CH2M Hill Sustainable Community Award in 2000 and an Award for Innovation from the International City Managers Association in 2001.

**For More information**

City of Kamloops TravelSmart website: [http://www.kamloops.ca/transportation/travelsmart.html](http://www.kamloops.ca/transportation/travelsmart.html)


**Related Sections**

- Economic Health
- Environmental Resources
- High Performing Government
High Performing Community Best Practices

OVERVIEW

The case studies contained within this section showcase unique ways in which local governments have partnered with other local and regional organizations, and have measured successes related to sustainability. Topics under the “high performing community” section will continue to be discussed during Phase 2, and additional topics may be identified. The high performing community best practice case studies are:

- Design Partnerships – Omaha, Nebraska
- Regional Planning Approach – Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC); a
- Sustainability Indicators – Seattle, Washington

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Research of other leading organizations and unique ideas may be necessary as the planning process proceeds. Some additional ideas for high performing community best practices include:

Innovative Practices

- Community scorecards to measure successes and gaps;
- Cost-benefit and life-cycle analyses of City green building efforts;
- Inclusive outreach to marginalized demographic groups;
- Long-term funding sources for City services; and
- Sustainability indicators to measure progress (e.g. Eugene, Oregon, Cascadia, Washington).
**COMMUNITY DESIGN PARTNERSHIPS**

**Leading Community:** Omaha, Nebraska  
**Population:** 427,872

Omaha is the largest city in the state of Nebraska located on the Missouri River about 20 miles (30 km) north of the mouth of the Platte River. The modern economy of Omaha is diverse and built on skilled knowledge jobs. In 2009, Forbes identified Omaha as the nation’s number one “Best Bang-For-The Buck City” and number one on "America's Fastest-Recovering Cities" list.

**Innovative Practices**

**Omaha By Design**

Omaha by Design is a civic planning organization dedicated to the development, implementation and monitoring of urban design and environmental public policy in the metro. The organization facilitates partnerships between the public, private and philanthropic sectors to execute projects that improve the quality of Omaha’s natural and built environments.

**Details and Background**

**Leadership**

The Omaha By Design Board of Directors meets three times a year to establish long-range objectives and fund-raising strategies for the organization.

The Omaha by Design Advisory Committee is comprised of the city’s public, private and philanthropic leaders representing a variety of professions, including developers, engineers, architects, planners and landscape architects, along with the heads of the city’s parks, planning and public works departments, and a representative of the mayor's office.

**Areas of Emphasis**

The organization’s projects and activities stem from four areas of emphasis:

- **Green Omaha** – preserving and enhancing the city’s natural setting and public park system
- **Civic Omaha** – defining and improving the city’s civic places and public image
- **Neighborhood Omaha** – preserving and enhancing the diversity of the city’s residential neighborhoods
- **Environment Omaha** – creating a more sustainable city by focusing on the natural environment, urban form and transportation, building construction, resource conservation and community health

**The Omaha by Design Process**

Omaha by Design’s six-step process is rooted in the organization’s ability to convene and manage diverse groups of people, all of whom have a stake in the issue at hand. The process includes:

- Issue research (local, regional, national),
- Working team recruitment,
- Meeting management,
- Community engagement management,
- Public relations/education management, and
- Issue advocacy and monitoring.

The end goal is the development of a collaborative solution or product.

**Partners and Support**

Omaha by Design relies upon the support of corporate and family philanthropists for operating expenses, as well as technical experts and other volunteers who contribute their resources to the organization. Fund raising is conducted for individual projects. Partners include:

- The Omaha Community Foundation which provides administrative support and 501(c)3 status; and
- The University of Nebraska at Omaha which provides office space.

**For More information**

Omaha By Design website: [http://www.omahabydesign.org/about/](http://www.omahabydesign.org/about/)

**Related Sections**

- Neighborhood and Community Livability
- High Performing Community
REGIONAL PLANNING APPROACH

Leading Organization: Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
Location: Central Ohio (Columbus and vicinity)

Like the northern Colorado region, the central Ohio region includes rural and urban areas facing tremendous growth. Over half a million people are expected to move into the region in the next decades, raising the total number of residents to approximately 2.5 million by 2030.

Innovative Practices

Regional Planning Approach
Alarmed by existing growth patterns, the City of Columbus asked the MORPC to develop a regional growth strategy. Until that point, the MORPC had acted as a traditional transportation agency, fulfilling its federally mandated duties as a metropolitan planning organization. Since 2006 the agency’s priorities have shifted to a holistic strategy tying transportation, housing, land use, energy, and economic development together. This has resulted in a vision of a central Ohio that “uses land resources more efficiently in an expanded climate of regional cooperation.”

Background and Details
The regional planning process took extensive coordination between public and private stakeholders. A steering committee was tasked with creating a common understanding of regional growth projects and an agenda for moving forward in a way consistent with the community aspirations expressed during the planning process. While it was difficult to get some of the more fast-growing communities to the table, the economic slowdown has freed up time for planning.

Implementation Priorities
Several key implementation priorities that have come out the regional growth strategy include:

- Model comprehensive plan program
- Regional cost of development analysis
- Advocating as a region to federal and state representatives and partners
- Leveraging existing multijurisdictional agreements and efforts
- On-going analysis of regional issues

Center for Energy and Environment
This cross-disciplinary center focuses on air and water quality, energy efficiency, land-use planning and sustainable development, food systems, and greenways protection. It helps MORPC achieve its mission through planning, communication, and implementation. An example: the Clean Diesel Program works with local communities, school districts, and others to implement technology improvements that provide cleaner air while recognizing the role diesel engines play in the region’s economy. The Center is funded by a combination of government transportation and planning programs, state and local agencies, private foundations, private businesses, and grants.

Central Ohio Green Pact
Signed by about half of MORPC’s member communities, this agreement commits local governments to making the region more sustainable through practical steps. These steps include

- Waste reduction
- Adopt a green fleet policy
- Purchase environmentally friendly products
- Attraction and retention of green businesses
- Adopt sensible land use policies

The latest group to sign the pact did so at the Center’s annual Summit on Sustainability and the Environment. The summit attracts more than 400 participants to hear about sustainability initiatives throughout the region and attend breakout sessions on “hot” topics.

For More information
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Website:
http://www.morpc.org

American Planning Association Website:
http://planning.org/planning/2010/feb/regionsustainable.htm

Related Sections

- Economic Health
- Environmental Resources
- Community and Neighborhood Livability
- Safety and Wellness
**SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS**

**Innovative Community:** Seattle, Washington  
**Population:** 602,000

Like Fort Collins, Seattle has a strong commitment to reaching sustainability and assessing its sustainability-related efforts.

**Innovative Practices**

**Sustainability Indicators**  
Founded in 1991, Sustainable Seattle is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainability in the Central Puget Sound, nationally, and internationally. The organization creates cutting edge products, processes and leadership that propel people and communities forward in reaching sustainability - locally and globally.

In practice, this means a balance of concerns for social equity, ecological integrity, and economic vitality – to create a livable community today while ensuring a healthy and fulfilling legacy for our children’s children. Sustainable Seattle has encapsulated this goal with sustainability indicators, goals, data and actions that are a product of participatory action research.

**Background and Details**

After the release of its 1998 Indicators, Sustainable Seattle decided to reassess its indicator program. The group was not satisfied with merely reporting data and noted that a successful program should include programs which support actions by citizens, businesses and policy makers to affect the trends documented by the indicators.

**Information Sharing:** Sustainable Seattle created a website, B-Sustainable, for all to learn about relationships and trends in the region for 20 sustainability goals in four environments:

- Natural,  
- Built,  
- Social, and  
- Personal.

The website uses an innovative sustainability indicators framework to make a wealth of information meaningful, accessible, and actionable.

**Goal-Oriented Indicators:** Indicators on the B-Sustainable website align with the goals of Sustainable Seattle. The indicators provided with each goal are intended to answer the questions: Why is this happening? (upstream indicators)  
What is happening? (status indicators)  
Why is this important? (downstream indicators)

For example, the built environment section contains a goal to advance sustainable mobility alternatives consistent with equity and human and ecosystem health. Indicators associated with sustainable transportation include:

- Bike and pedestrian counts, work commute choices, land use mix, etc. (Why it is happening)  
- Vehicle miles traveled (What is happening)  
- Annual traffic delay per peak traveler, motor vehicle injury and death rates, prevalence of overweight and obese adults, and satisfaction with transportation choices (Why it is important)

**For More Information**

Sustainable Seattle Website: http://sustainableseattle.org/

B-Sustainable Website: http://www.b-sustainable.org

**Related Sections**

- Economic Health  
- Environmental Resources  
- Community and Neighborhood Livability  
- Safety and Wellness  
- Culture, Parks, and Recreation  
- Transportation
HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE!

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