

To: Mayor Miro Weinberger
City Council
From: Jennifer Green, Sustainability Coordinator, CEDO
Re: Sustainability, Cost Savings, and the General Fund
Date: December 6, 2013

cc: Peter Owens, Director, CEDO
Marcy Krumbine, Assistant Director of Community Development, CEDO

Introduction: Burlington has a long-history of embracing sustainability as a quality of life issue. The plan for a Burlington Sustainability Program, developed from the Legacy's environmental component will embrace shared projects among major program stakeholders, the City's effort to implement joint projects internally and grant/development projects which will incorporate sustainable principles. However, sustainability can also mean reduced public spending and sound fiscal management.

This memo outlines several ways, in this Plan, the City can save money while reducing our environmental footprint and suggests that by investing in sustainability now, cost savings programs can be developed and rolled-out over the coming years, to realize significant financial benefit for years to come.

The Sustainability Coordinator will partner with Burlington Electric Department to create a Comprehensive Collaborative Energy Efficiency Plan.

I. Energy Reduction in City Buildings and LED Street Lighting: Reducing energy use through efficiency in City buildings allows City government to not only lessen our environmental footprint and meet our Green House Gas reduction goals, but save money. For example, over FY 13-14, with initial assistance from an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant secured through the Sustainability Coordinator, the Fletcher Free Library will save thousands of dollars through efficient lighting and an improved HVAC system.

There is still much work to be done. For example, over FY 2012, the City spent approximately \$345,704.00 on electricity and gas in its 9 major buildings. *Creating a Comprehensive Collaborative Energy Efficiency Plan during the remainder of FY 14, and setting a goal of reducing energy by 5% over FY 15, the City will realize approximately \$17,285 in savings.* And of course, investments in energy efficiency can also yield strong equipment maintenance savings.

Also important are the savings associated with replacing the City's 4,400 streetlights with high efficiency LED fixtures. Approximately 500 have been switched out to date, with each bulb saving roughly \$50 in annually savings. (Because of the financial benefits, many cities are aggressively moving forward with LED street lighting work. For example, Asheville, NC replaced their 7,500 fixtures for \$401,476 in energy efficiency and maintenance savings per year).

Building on the existing partnership with Burlington Electric Department, the Sustainability Coordinator will partner with City Departments to create fuel reduction and waste consolidation/reduction plans for a more efficient use of valuable resources.

II. Vehicle Fleet: The City currently owns and operates 278 vehicles and budgeted \$739,411 for fuel (unleaded and bio-diesel) in FY13, or approximately 200,000 gallons. This reality, coupled with the City Council's request for the creation of a phase-out plan for our current fleet, presents an extraordinary opportunity to save money, plan for future and more efficient vehicle purchases, and maximize resources.¹

To start realizing the financial savings of reduced fuel use, the Sustainability Coordinator organized eco-driving training for BED, Code and DPW staff with assistance from the Transportation Research Center. To maximize this opportunity, the Sustainability Coordinator, with support from City leadership and colleagues, will develop *a fuel reduction program in FY15, including comprehensive eco-driving training for all city staff who drive for work, to realize financial savings over FY 16 and FY17.*

III. Waste Analysis and Consolidation: Waste collection among the City's 9 main buildings is currently contracted out to 3 private haulers and handled by Parks and Recreation, DPW and independently by each fire house. Consolidated information, including total financial cost of hauling City building waste, is not readily available. And although difficult to estimate the savings at this time, it is safe to assume that by quantifying and inventorying City waste streams, we will be able to ultimately centralize and manage rubbish budgets while potentially saving money and identifying new windows for further waste reduction. *Over FY 16, the Sustainability Coordinator proposes to oversee the development of a waste reduction strategy to capture savings in FY17 and beyond.*

Conclusion: Burlington prides itself on being a great place to live, work and visit, and embraces the principles of sustainability as one of its defining characteristics. Beyond this is the important role sustainability can play in financial savings through energy efficiency and operational efficiencies, and resource reduction. Through the development of a City-wide Comprehensive Collaborative Energy Efficiency Plan, as well as fuel and waste reduction/consolidation plans, these goals for the City can be realized.

¹ Other cities offer examples of how to do this, including Indianapolis: http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-12/business/35767422_1_plug-in-hybrid-vehicles-heavy-vehicles-new-vehicles