

The City of Helena 2009 Climate Action Plan Progress

Complete	Not Feasible	On Hold	Modified
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Implementation (IMP)

Recommendation	Additional Detail	Status
1. Hire Sustainability Coordinator.	Hire FTE to support the implementation of Climate Action Plan recommendations.	Between 2009-2014 a .5 FTE Sustainability Coordinator was regularly funded through City/County, and EEC Block Grant money, with funding dropping off from 2014-2019. For part of 2021 and 2022 this position was vacant, however in 2022 this position was expanded to a FTE and is now the Sustainability and Recycling Coordinator. This position has been filled since November 2022.
2. Develop Green Team.	Form a "Green Team" comprised of staff from each City department, to support Climate Action Plan recommendations.	A Green Team was initially formed, however with the status of the Sustainability Coordinator position changing over the years, the COVID-19 pandemic, and vacancies in several key positions, the City has postponed this initiative until vacancies are filled.
3. Develop Citizen Conservation Oversight.	Form an ongoing Board that will support measures undertaken by the City.	In 2017, City Commission passed Resolution 20375, establishing the Citizens Conservation Board. More recently this board was re-established in 2023.

4. Develop Education & Outreach.	Education and Outreach efforts designed to improve conservation measures.	The City utilizes the Public Information Officer to create informational videos, social media posts, and utility fliers to continually inform and educate the public on sustainability efforts. Additionally, the City has a contract with a PR consultant for additional services and projects.
5. Implement a Program of Ongoing Data Collection, Monitoring, and Reporting.	Monitor and report on the progress of recommendations.	The City has used ClearPath/ICLEI in the past to assess GHG emissions, though a bit cumbersome, alternative data tracking programs are being looked at. The Annual Sustainability Report showcases the progress of these initiatives.
6. Establish a Municipal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goal.	Reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by 20% below 2007 levels by 2020.	The 2020 Sustainability Report showed that the City reduced its GHG emissions by 4% between 2007 and 2020 and stated this initiative to be unrealistic.
7. Sign the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement.	Sign the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.	In 2010, Mayor Smith signed the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, showing the City of Helena's support to reduce GHG emissions both locally and nationally.
8. Develop Funding and Leveraging Resources.	Develop a structural process to support funding for staff and resources, in addition, actively pursue existing grant and partnership opportunities.	The City continues to pursue multiple sustainability-related grant opportunities and rebates. More recently these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 DEQ EVC Grant • 2023 EPA SWFIR/REO Grant • 2023 EEC Block Grant • 2023 IRA Rebate

Energy Efficiency and Municipal Operations (NRG)

<p>1. Lighting Upgrade at Tenmile Water Treatment Facility.</p>	<p>Upgrade lighting at TM Water Treatment Plant with fluorescent T5 bulbs.</p>	<p>Upgrades to the lighting at the TM Water Treatment Plant have continued over the years. The initial incandescent lighting was replaced with F32T8 fluorescent troffers, including variable output LED troffer panels and strips, all set to the lowest wattage available. This turned out to be significantly more efficient than the originally proposed initiative.</p>
<p>2. Study / Install Water-Source Heat Pump at Tenmile Facility.</p>	<p>Replace electric-resistance heating with a water-source heat pump.</p>	<p>In 2011, the electric-resistance heat pump at the TM Water Treatment Plant was updated to a water-source heat pump.</p>
<p>3. Study / Install Biomass Generator at Tenmile Facility.</p>	<p>Construct a 50-kW biomass generator at TM Water Treatment Plant.</p>	<p>In 2009, a feasibility study discovered that this project would not be cost-effective.</p>
<p>4. Efficiency Upgrades at Wastewater Treatment Plant.</p>	<p>Install Stirling Engines, blower building heat recovery system, frequency drives, and improved controls at Wastewater Treatment Plant.</p>	<p>Updates to the aeration, heat recovery and control systems continue to improve optimization and efficiency at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.</p>

5. Zero Waste Wastewater Treatment Energy Target.	Take steps towards achieving Net Zero Energy at the Wastewater Treatment Plant	Although the Wastewater Treatment Plant has made several energy-efficient upgrades over the years, based on current technologies and infrastructure this initiative is not feasible.
6. Develop a Comprehensive Energy Management Strategy.	Establish goals and an overall action plan for energy conservation, renewable energy activities, and long-term management and monitoring of the City's energy consumption.	Projected for 2024, the City of Helena plans to complete a Sustainability Evaluation and Plan. This evaluation will look into each of the cities facilities for possible sustainability projects such as improving insulation, equipment upgrades, feasibility of solar panel project, etc. This will then allow for planning, budgeting, and coordination between all City Departments.
7. Adopt Energy Efficiency Standards for City-owned Buildings.	City-owned or leased buildings to adopt standards similar to IECC or SB 49.	City-Owned buildings have made updates to improve their energy efficiencies, which has created a downward trend in energy usage. Over the past 3 years, the City has seen a 37% reduction in facilities energy usage. This was completed without any formal policy or standards having been necessary for implementation.
8. Improve Lighting Efficiency of City Buildings	Prioritize lighting as a potential low-cost strategy for achieving energy savings and Greenhouse Gas reductions.	Energy-efficient LED lights have become the standard during replacement and installation in all City buildings.

<p>9. Reduce “Plug Loads” in Buildings</p>	<p>Reduce energy demand for electrical equipment used in buildings.</p>	<p>City-Owned buildings have made updates to improve their energy efficiencies, which has created a downward trend in energy usage.</p>
<p>10. Work with the utility (NorthWestern Energy) and Regulator (Public Service Commission) on Policies to Support Conservation and Renewable Energy.</p>	<p>Work to protect, expand, or adopt rate structures that favor clean energy.</p>	<p>In 2021, The City of Helena entered into an interlocal agreement with Missoula, Missoula County and Bozeman, to pursue a green tariff, and advance shared clean energy goals. This agreement authorizes the hiring of a consultant to work collaboratively with NorthWestern Energy and inform the development of a green tariff that most effectively advances the local governments’ 100% clean electricity goals. The City of Helena allocated \$8000 to support this effort. The status is ongoing via quarterly meetings between Helena, Bozeman, Missoula, and Missoula County.</p>
<p>11. Study and Develop Renewable Energy Projects at City /County Facilities</p>	<p>Installation of a 10 kilowatt solar electric array on the City-County building and identify an appropriate site to move forward with a 50-kW wind turbine project.</p>	<p>The City/County building is a historic building and would not withstand the construction of a solar array project, therefore this initiative is not feasible. The City is installing a 50kW solar project at the City Transportation Shop. Several important factors were not included in the design of this project; therefore, many issues have arisen. The wind turbine project was explored and determined to be infeasible.</p>

<p>12. Adopt State Efficiency Standards and Improve Fleet Performance</p>	<p>Adopt the State of Montana's fleet fuel economy goals and standards</p>	<p>This recommendation is not feasible. Fleet does not have the authority over purchasing and operational procedures, or to create an idling policy for all Departments. We may be able to meet CAFÉ standards on passenger vehicles however many fleet vehicles are heavy-duty trucks, and 35 mpg is not realistic. When possible, the City has been able to leverage fuel and maintenance savings to pay for Fleet operations without increasing departmental budgets. The City is continuing to work on the Fleet policy, however, the past couple of years has been challenging due to supply chain issues, some vehicles were slated to be replaced but because of a lack of supply, haven't.</p>
<p>13. Study Biodiesel Use and Supply</p>	<p>Produce a study analyzing the potential for using a 20% blend of biodiesel in Helena's municipal vehicles</p>	<p>Advancements in electric vehicles have encouraged a different pathway, so this recommendation will not be pursued.</p>
<p>14. Convert Streetlights and Parking Lots to LED/Solar Technology</p>	<p>Replace all area lights with LED and/or solar-powered technology.</p>	<p>Energy-efficient LED lights have become the standard during replacement and installation.</p>
<p>15. Employee Commute and Waste Reduction</p>	<p>Options to reduce fuel use from employee commuting, and Establish a comprehensive waste reduction, and conservation policy.</p>	<p>The City encourages non-motorized commuting, and bike racks are available for use at a majority of city and county buildings. Recycling is also available on every floor of the City-County building. Implementing an employee commute and waste reduction policy is not feasible.</p>

Water Supply, Treatment, and Delivery (WTR)

<p>1. Adopt Conservation Rates</p>	<p>Reduce overall water demand, on the water treatment plant.</p>	<p>The City of Helena implemented a tiered water rate system in 2017 to incentivize residents to consume less water.</p>
<p>2. Continue upgrade of Supply and Treatment Facilities as outlined in the 2005 Water Facilities Plan</p>	<p>Enhance supply and water treatment capacity levels by prioritizing usage of the Missouri River Treatment Plant and making the Ten Mile Water Treatment Plant a secondary source.</p>	<p>Ten Mile WTP is a gravity-fed system; making it a more energy-efficient option compared to the Missouri River, therefore this recommendation is not feasible. Several updates have been made to improve functions at Ten Mile, including replacing main lines in 2019, and lining of Historic Hale Reservoir. It was believed these two actions together improved water loss by ½ a million gallons a day.</p>
<p>3. Adopt “Lush and Lean” Landscaping Practices for municipal Properties</p>	<p>Adapt water conservation practices in the design and maintenance of municipal landscaping projects.</p>	<p>In recent years, the City converted City parks from irrigating with treated drinking water, to irrigating with well water in the early morning hours. The City currently uses water pumped from methane intercept wells under the former City of Helena landfill to irrigate Bill Roberts Golf Course. This has a dual effect of providing water to the golf course and providing treatment for the well water. Additionally in 2022, The City reached out to all of the domestic sprinkler companies in Helena to explain the best time to set sprinklers for water and energy conservation purposes and will continue to do this annually.</p>

4. Study and develop Community Water Conservation Incentives	To reduce daily per capita demand from 175 in 2005 to 100 gallons in 2025	The City of Helena is unsure of the feasibility of this recommendation. However, the City continues to promote water conservation whenever possible.
5. Develop a Multi-Faceted Education and outreach Program on Water Conservation	Comprehensive outreach and education program	The City provides conservation tips and resources through utility bill inserts and through information and videos on the public works website. In July 2021, a Water Wise Helena booklet was launched which gave citizens extensive information on how to conserve water. Additionally, in 2022 the City participated in the Mayor's National Water Conservation Challenge, a competition between cities to encourage citizens and other entities to commit to water conservation practices. Helena, likely due to extensive outreach and education by the City, ranked highest out of the major seven cities in Montana. Helena intends to enter the challenge again in 2023.
6. Research and Adopt a Targeted Program to Regulate Water use	Require by ordinance, code, or other statutory mechanism employed by local government to conserve water.	The City believes that no ordinance is necessary since the water conservation incentive [WTR 4] is meant to deter excessive water usage, also this kind of ordinance would be difficult to monitor and enforce.
7. Pursue Water Supply/municipal Watershed Protection	Implement the recommendations of the Tenmile Watershed Collaborative Committee	Many of the recommendations of the TMWCC focused on Forest Service Land, Wildlife Habitat, and Wetlands, most of which the City of Helena does not oversee. This initiative is not feasible through the City of Helena.

Transportation, Waste, Recycling, Public Private Partnerships (TWRP)

<p>1. Support the Formation of an Urban-Area Transportation District</p>	<p>Decrease vehicle miles driven in the Helena area for commuting and non-work-related travel, and increase the mobility of elderly, disabled, low-income, student, and visitor populations. Increase public transportation ridership from 122,011 (2008) to 222,001 by 2012.</p>	<p>An “Urban-Area Transportation District” will not be formed. In the past year, due to public comments, and low ridership numbers, the transit model was moved over to “demand response” which allowed the City to almost double ridership numbers. In addition, The City is utilizing smaller vehicles instead of large buses to implement the new model. More planning will be coming in the next few years as we have recently been informed, the City now must meet the requirements for a Metropolitan Planning Organization. This new designation, once official will have several associated plans that will address transportation across the urban boundary, including portions of Lewis and Clark County, all the City of Helena, and East Helena.</p>
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<p>2. Improve non-motorized Transportation Policy and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Support and fund recommendations of the Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council, to Replace vehicle miles driven with pedestrian and bicycle miles</p>	<p>In 2010, City Commission adopted resolution 19799 to “incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects.” Since then, several Non-motorized improvement projects have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and continued planning of Centennial Trail • Increased and improved designated bike lanes. • Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons for improved pedestrian crossings. • Raised intersection at Front Street and Neill Avenue. • Installation of numerous ADA Ramps • Installation of numerous sidewalks through development requirements or voluntary by homeowners. • Working with the School District to update Safe Routes to School • Grant submission for design phase of pedestrian crossing • Downtown Multimodal Study in process
<p>3. Establish a True Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program</p>	<p>Implement PAYT solid waste program, which charges residents for the waste they generate.</p>	<p>The City is currently waiting for the results of the Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan to see if this initiative will be enacted.</p>
<p>4. Adopt a Resolution to meet EPA Goal: 35% Recycling of Municipal Solid Waste</p>	<p>EPA diversion goal of: 19% by 2011. 22% by 2015. 35% by 2020</p>	<p>In 2021, Helena City Commission adopted Resolution 20643 which established a goal for the City to reduce its solid waste disposal to landfill by 50% by 2040 with an interim target of 35% reduction by 2030. These goals are specific to the City of Helena and all generators of waste in the City limits. The 2022 Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction supported these goals and calculated the City’s diversion rate at 26%. Therefore, this recommendation is not feasible.</p>

<p>5. Institute a Per-Bag Fee System to Reduce the use of disposable Shopping Bags</p>	<p>Pass a City ordinance requiring a 10¢ or 25¢ fee for each disposable shopping bag.</p>	<p>7-1-111(21), MCA, prevents local government from “affecting, applying to, or regulating the use, disposition, sale, prohibitions, fees, charges, or taxes on auxiliary containers. See also 7-1-121, MCA</p>
<p>6. Adopt a Municipal Back-to-the-Tap-Policy</p>	<p>Policies and programs that eliminate the use of bottled water for Government agencies.</p>	<p>Many City-owned buildings have updated their drinking fountains to bottle refilling stations, however, this kind of policy is not necessary or feasible.</p>
<p>7. Adopt a Green a Blocks Program</p>	<p>Recommendations that the City of Helena partner with NorthWestern Energy, Lewis & Clark County, HCC, AERO, and S.A.V.E. to conduct energy, water, and waste audits and retrofits in 100 homes.</p>	<p>There was a Green Blocks Program audit done in 2010, however, it is unknown what the results of this audit were, if their goals were met, or what the long-term sustainability plan was after the completion of the audit.</p>
<p>8. Increase Local Food Production and Consumption</p>	<p>Community gardens within walking distance of every neighborhood by 2012; increase sales of Montana grown food 20% by 2020.</p>	<p>The City promotes community and home gardens where possible.</p>