

Energy Efficiency in Small Towns: a Mayor's Perspective

Mayor John Tabori, University Park, MD

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What is STEP-UP?

A 3-year grant from the U.S.
Department of Energy (July 2010
through July 2013)



“To create a model community
energy transformation program
that serves as a roadmap for other
small towns across the U.S.”



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Why Small Towns?



- 80% of US population lives in only 350 metro areas

...but

- Slightly more than one-half of the US population lives in jurisdictions --- cities, towns, boroughs, villages and townships --- of <25,000 people
- The average local jurisdiction population in the United States is only 6,200 (Wendell Cox, New Geography, 9-2008)

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UP is a “Typical” Small Town



UP by the Numbers:

- 2,548 residents
- 923 homes
- two churches, one elementary school, one town hall

“Typical” small town elements:

- Volunteer Council
- Small municipal staff
- Modest budget
- Limited energy expertise on staff

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STEP-UP Goals



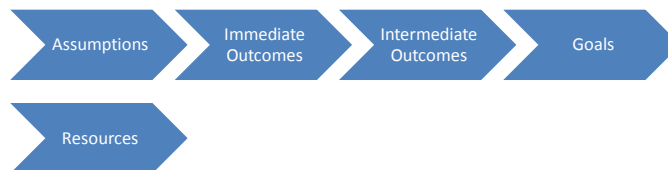
- Improve energy efficiency by 20% in 25% of UP homes;
- Achieve an additional 5% reduction in community-wide energy use through
 - streetlight retrofits
 - a rooftop solar project on the local school
 - kitchen waste composting
 - a program to reduce vehicle miles travelled;
- 500 other small-towns will download from STEP-UP a free, ready-to-use tool-kit of templates, replicable best practices, and community case studies.



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STEP-UP Logic Model

How to design STEP-UP to achieve these stretch goals when “successful” efficiency programs typically have community penetration rates of less than 2%?



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Assumptions



1. Small town resources are constrained
2. UP is a typical small town
3. UP residents are motivated
4. Efficiency can be improved in UP housing stock
5. Individual facilitation will be the key to success in small communities: **The Energy Coach**

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Resources



Community Assets

UP residents
 Civic Association, clubs, churches
 UPES and PTA
 Brownies / guides / scouts
 UP listserve
 UP newsletter
 UP events



Leveraged Resources

Department of Energy
 Pepco
 Sun Trust
 Alliance to Save Energy
 Maryland Energy Administration
 Community Solar LLC
 Maryland Clean Energy Center
 Local Contractors
 Other small towns

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Immediate Outcomes



1. Reduced information barriers for residents
2. Reduced transaction barriers for residents
3. Reduced financial barriers for residents
4. Increased trust, participation and outreach among residents

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Intermediate Outcomes: 4 Months In

- 128 homes have signed up for the program, 14% of the town
- 75 home have completed a full home audit, 8% of the town
- 35 homes have completed or are in contract review for efficiency upgrades, 3.5% of the town



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Governance Challenges



1. Managing the politics on Town Council
2. Managing risk and liability issues for the Town
3. Implementation, monitoring progress and communications with staff and Council
4. Infrastructure considerations (ex: office space)
5. Additional burden on other municipal staff
6. A BIG time commitment for a small town

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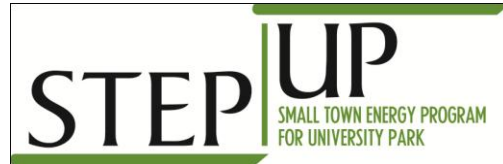
Conclusions



1. Exciting community project off to a solid start
2. Not to be entered into lightly by a town of any size - particularly a small town
3. Has the potential to be a replicable model
4. Proof will be in the ability to hit target numbers in the coming two years

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THANK YOU



Mayor John Tabori

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