

“New Haven Green” Takes on a Whole New Meaning

The City of New Haven has much to boast about. Now it can add to that list a host of actions to conserve energy and protect the environment. The city has long been a leader on this front. It was among the first in Connecticut to become a member of [Cities for Climate Protection](#), complete a greenhouse gas inventory, draft a local action plan, and take a close look at its energy use. In addition to helping improve air quality, the city saved more than \$5 million in energy costs last year. Over the past five years, it has averaged annual savings of \$4 million. Conservation projects are expected to offset annual CO2 emissions by 47 million pounds, sulfur dioxide by 245,000 pounds, and nitrogen oxide by 155,000 pounds.

What has New Haven done to reap these energy and cost savings? City officials began to get serious about energy use more than 10 years ago. They began a major project to install real-time energy monitoring and controls in municipal buildings. Each year, more buildings have been included, so that there are now 90 facilities throughout the city that can control electrical power consumption. In 2004-05, other investments included replacing the city’s entire roadway lighting system to make more efficient use of power and reduce maintenance cost and light pollution.

“The city of New Haven has taken a lead in Connecticut to switch to renewable energy sources to decrease municipal costs and to lessen our reliance on fossil fuels. It has been a priority of my administration to fight for cleaner air and promote sustainable communities, and I am grateful for the support and input of many active citizens.”

Mayor John DeStefano

The city has embarked on a major, 10-year school construction program that will eventually result in 50 renovated or new schools. Each school is designed and built with additional energy savings features such as occupancy sensors to shut off lighting, high-efficiency electric motors, and digital energy monitoring systems. Since 2003, all new schools have been designed to meet a combination [LEED](#) and [Energy Star](#) standard. In the future, schools will also be required to meet the standards set in the New Haven Public Schools *High Performance Schools Design Guide*, to maximize building efficiency and reduce environmental impacts. To date, eight new schools have been built. They are expected to consume 30 percent less energy and save \$400,000 a year.

Transportation is another area where New Haven has stepped up to the plate. A transportation choices initiative was included in the City’s new comprehensive plan. It features a new greenway plan and improvements to bike paths such as the Orange Street bike lane. The city’s Clean Fleets/Clean Fuels program was created to replace the city’s car fleet with hybrid vehicles, natural gas and electric vehicles and to use ultra-low sulfur diesel in school buses.

And that’s not all. New Haven is committed to purchasing 20 percent of its electricity from clean power -- in 2005 New Haven became a [Clean Energy Community](#). An outreach program to educate residents on the benefits of clean energy and the relationship between energy and environmental quality is being developed.

