



Getting Started

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Five Early Steps toward a Clean Economy

The 22 recommendations presented in this strategy address diverse elements of a clean economy: leadership, community engagement, resource efficiency, renewable energy, planning and growth, and economic development. Some actions require partnerships and longer-term investments, while others are easy to implement by City staff alone.

Taken together, the recommendations provide initial direction to help the City **advance its four goals** identified at the start of this project:

1. Reduce operating costs for both the City and the community through energy-saving and resource-efficiency measures.
2. Understand greenhouse gas impacts and identify cost-effective steps to reduce emissions and save energy.
3. Capitalize on opportunities for funding and investment, including federal grants, state infrastructure funding, and other regional investments.
4. Identify new initiatives for a competitive, clean local economy and fulfill Renton's commitment to stay "ahead of the curve."

However, with 22 recommendations, it can be daunting to determine where to begin!

Starting with a few strategic actions can help focus the effort and achieve early wins, contributing to overall sustainability of the program. Therefore, **five immediate steps** are recommended below to firmly put Renton on the path to developing a more prosperous and clean economy over time.

Step 1. Formalize the commitment and establish a Green Team.

Step 2. Identify and implement additional resource conservation upgrades at City facilities and set high standards for new infrastructure.

Step 3. Engage with employers on efforts to green their businesses and the Renton community.

Step 4. Partner with utilities, institutions, employers, and others to implement a community energy program.

Step 5. Launch a transportation campaign in Renton to engage the community in both short-term actions and long-term advocacy for regional transportation investments in Renton.

These steps integrate across many of the recommendations and are designed to create early momentum, build support for future efforts, achieve near-term cost-savings greenhouse gas reductions, and lay the groundwork for bolder initiatives. These five steps rose to the surface in reviewing the findings and opportunities as well as considering ways to build a foundation for long-term success. They will help establish leadership and coordination to focus and sustain actions. They directly align with the needs and interests of stakeholders. Finally, most are relatively easy to implement, at least in increments, and build on existing activities to leverage additional resources and partnerships.



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Step 1

Formalize the commitment and establish a Green Team.

(Actions 1-1, 1-2, 1-3)

An important first step for the City is to acquire the support and direction from Renton's leadership to make sustainability and clean energy the lens through which to view all City action. Once in place, this commitment should be embedded into the City's brand to strongly promote these values internally and externally. The Renton Business Plan and other formal City documents do articulate a number of green values, but could benefit from a more direct statement about the intention to drive toward a clean and green economy. Forming a Green Team is a key step for implementing clean economy investments and actions across the various departments and lines of business and demonstrating City leadership in the community. In addition, engaging staff will help to generate innovation and new ideas as well as put in place systems for monitoring and communicating progress over time.

Step 2

Identify and implement additional resource conservation upgrades at City facilities and set high standards for new infrastructure.

(Actions 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 4-1)

Leading by example through infrastructure investments sets the right example and can generate significant cost savings to benefit City operations. City buildings, fleets, and other infrastructure improvements are often easy to implement in that they fall within the purview of the City. There are a number of utility programs and energy and waste management companies available to help implement and deliver positive returns on these investments relatively quickly. Resource conservation activities provide tangible actions with quantifiable outcomes to show immediate progress in reducing cost and greenhouse gas emissions. The municipal greenhouse gas inventory provides a wealth of data and information to help drive greater efficiencies in specific buildings, fleets, and infrastructure. The City's current relationships

with PSE, an energy service company, the EV Project, and Waste Management are critical resources to tap for these endeavors.

Step 3

Engage with employers on efforts to green their businesses and the Renton community.

(Actions 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, and 3-4)

Interviews with Renton employers indicate a high level of excitement and interest in the business community for sustainability and clean economy initiatives. Many of Renton's employers are national leaders in resource conservation. They expressed strong green values and corporate leadership in these areas. At the same time, smaller businesses could benefit from greater assistance. Business leaders are interested in learning from one another as well as supporting efforts to create a clean economy. Partnership with utilities and waste management companies can enable the City to better support Renton's business community to green operations and thrive through greater

efficiency and cost savings. Through Renton's participation with regional green business efforts such as the Eastside Sustainable Business Alliance as well as strategic partnerships with local institutions such as the Renton Chamber of Commerce and Renton Technical College, the City can foster greater public-private partnerships to achieve the City's climate protection and clean economy goals.

Step 4

Partner with utilities, institutions, employers, and others to implement a community energy program

(Action 2-7, 2-8, 2-9, 3-2)

Utilities such as Puget Sound Energy and Seattle City Light are looking for opportunities to partner with local governments to deliver community energy services, especially to underserved customers such as small businesses and lower income households. Targeting a particular neighborhood or business sector in Renton for direct install or upgrades of weatherization

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measures or developing a cooperative effort such as district energy or community solar are opportunities for helping the community reap clean energy benefits such as cost savings, green jobs, and healthy air.

The initiative could begin small by packaging and marketing available energy rebates and financing, or could involve developing new programs with utilities, Renton Technical College, and others to foster green jobs and economic development in the area of energy efficiency. Sustainable Works is a Tukwila-based non-profit delivering full service energy upgrades in select communities (currently working Spokane, Lynnwood-Edmonds, Seattle, and Shoreline). Climate Solutions' New Energy Cities program is one opportunity for leveraging outside resources to support community energy initiatives. Federal grants and utility conservation dollars are other ideas for funding such an effort.

Step 5

Launch a transportation campaign in Renton to engage the community in both short-term actions and long-term advocacy for regional transportation investments in Renton.

(Actions 2-4, 4-1, 4-2)

Renton's greenhouse gas inventory shows that just under 50 percent of the City's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation activities. Interviews with Renton employers and staff indicate high interest in tackling the City's transportation challenges. Through planning and development, City staff members are prioritizing compact and walkable neighborhoods and infrastructure to support multimodal transportation through investments in Complete Streets, public transit, trails and bike paths and participation in the *STEP AWAY from the car* effort.

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Given high community interest in this topic and the role Renton serves as a regional transportation hub, the City should initiate a local campaign to engage community leaders in implementing highly visible transportation actions at the local level (e.g. employee commuting) as it builds a community constituency to advocate for longer-term regional transportation investments in Renton.