Our Mission

"Charlotte will become a national leader in environmental initiatives to preserve our natural resources while balancing growth with sound fiscal policy."

The City of Charlotte recognizes that environmental stewardship is fundamentally important to our quality of life and essential to maintaining a vibrant economy. Protecting our natural resources, promoting conservation, and improving the environment enhance our City's mission to preserve the quality of life for our citizens. Recent accomplishments related to the City's environmental initiatives include:

Waste Reduction

- Single-stream residential recycling launched City-wide in 2010, resulting in 25% increase in materials recycled.
- City buildings participating in recycling have doubled in the last year, from 42 to 84. The City has joined Mecklenburg County in the Re-Think Recycling campaign, an internal initiative aimed at increasing employee participation in waste reduction programs at City and County facilities.

Tree Canopy Preservation

- The City has been named "Tree City USA" for 30 consecutive years by the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- The City's Tree Ordinance revised in 2010 requires more tree preservation on commercial sites.
- Charlotte is replenishing its tree canopy by planting 2,000 trees throughout the City this year.

Land Use and Transportation

- The City's award-winning land use and transportation initiatives include the development of the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth framework and Urban Street Design Guidelines, a tool for designing streets that provide capacity and mobility for motorists while also being safe and more convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and neighborhood residents.
- The City began service on its first Light Rail line in November 2008. With the average daily ridership of 15,602, it continues to exceed original projection of 9,100 daily ridership.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation

The City was awarded a $6.5 million Federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, for 17 projects that involve the community and City-owned facilities. Among the 17 projects are:

- **Neighborhood Energy Challenge** – Neighborhood-level involvement in planning and energy solutions.
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** – Purchase of 3-5 electric vehicles for the City fleet; installation of up to 10 publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations in Charlotte's high employment centers.

- **City Building Retrofits** – Energy improvements for City facilities including: upgrading chillers, boilers, motors, light fixtures, high efficiency cooling units, lighting replacements and room occupancy sensors.
- **Central Business District Recycling** – Recycling receptacles (alongside current waste receptacles) within the public right of way in Uptown Charlotte. Two tons of recyclables have been diverted from the waste stream since installation in mid-2010.
- **The Power2 Charlotte Campaign** – created to promote the Energy Efficiency Block Grant projects. Through its website, www.power2charlotte.com and newsletter, the City raises awareness about energy and the environment, along with providing information and links to news and events in the community.

City Operations

- The City is an active participant in Smart Energy Now, a first-of-its-kind public-private collaboration to make commercial buildings in the urban core more energy efficient. The partnership is led by Duke Energy, Cisco and Charlotte Center City Partners, with a goal of reducing energy use by up to 20% by 2016.
- The City has adopted a Sustainable Facilities Policy, incorporating environmentally responsible elements in the design, construction and operation of City facilities.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Environmental Services Facility is the City's first Gold Certified LEED Facility.
- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center has been designated an Energy Star facility for each of the past two years.
- The City is piloting two solar energy projects, one at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, and the other at one of the City's street maintenance facilities. Solar panels on the roof of both buildings will help generate electricity that will be sold to Duke Energy.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities has achieved ISO certification for two of its wastewater treatment plants, and for the department's Biosolids program.
- The City's first Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan for City operations is under development.
- "Green" fleet and purchasing policies have been adopted.
- New technologies such as a solar thermal hot water system and white membrane roof are in place at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Metro Station.
- Charlotte is keeping 100% of stream mitigation local by utilizing the City's Stream Mitigation Bank when public project remediation is required. This is the first municipally-managed bank in the nation.

Education and Public Involvement

- **Charlotte's Energy Strategy** – In 2009, City Council approved a City Energy Strategy, developed with public input from community meetings and a special website inviting comment and ideas. This strategy became the basis for the City's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant application.
- **Pledge to Improve the Environment** – The City has adopted a Pledge to Improve the Environment. Pledge cards are distributed at community events and are accessible through the City's web site. Residents are asked to pledge to take certain steps to make their household and community more environmentally-conscious and sustainable through activities such as riding public transit, using compact fluorescent bulbs, installing programmable thermostats, and recycling.

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