

Fort Collins, CO



GREEN
ELECTRONICS
COUNCIL

I.C.L.E.I
Local
Governments
for Sustainability



EPEAT Tool and ClearPath

Fort Collins is a mid-sized Colorado city known for its commitment to sustainability. In 2015, the City of Fort Collins demonstrated this commitment in aggressive new targets to its Climate Action Plan (CAP) with goals to reduce community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, 80 percent by 2030, and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. In 2013, the City started down its Road to Zero Waste by 2030. The City organization leads by example and therefore holds these same goals.

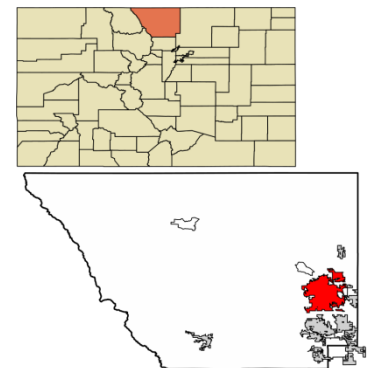
Of course, achieving goals of this scale requires work and dedication in many areas. One in which the City excels is sustainable purchasing and materials management, particularly of IT equipment. By choosing equipment that uses energy efficiently, the City reduces its overall energy use and emissions, and by responsibly managing materials leaving the organization, the City reduces its waste and waste-related emissions. The City utilizes ICLEI's ClearPath tool, an online software platform for local governments to report and archive GHG inventories, and the Green Electronics Council's EPEAT Registry, a global ecolabel for the IT sector, to explore and communicate its progress in improving these processes and realizing its ambitious goals.

Case study

January 2019

Climate Action and Materials Management

The City of Fort Collins first laid out its commitment to climate action in 1999 with the City's first CAP. Since then, the organization, its partners, and the community have continued to act as leaders in climate action. The City began prioritizing sustainable management of IT equipment in 2013, led by the same values of stewardship and excellence that guide all sustainability efforts at the City. Currently, the City purchases all electronics equipment at a Silver or Gold-rated EPEAT Standard, an evaluation of items' design, production, and energy use. Additionally, the City has been a State Electronics Challenge Partner since 2014, which requires that participants report their purchases of electronics by EPEAT rating; the electronics' "power-down" and double-sided print enabled features; the products' average life span; and end-of-life management. In 2017, the City reported that 100 percent of its units had "power down" and double-sided print features enabled, that equipment in the organization had a life span of 60 or more months, and that all pieces of equipment had been transferred or donated for reuse and 10,350 pounds of office electronic equipment had been recycled.



Population/land area

165,080 / 55.82 sq. mi

Map: Wikipedia

GHG Inventory Accounting: In-Boundary Emissions

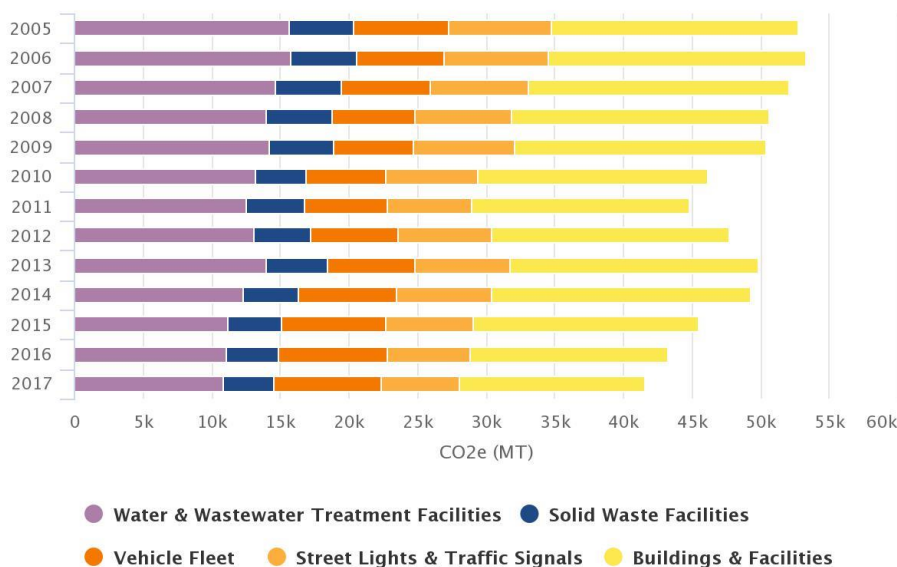
To understand how various policies, purchasing standards, and management practices help the City reach its goals, staff completes a carbon inventory for the municipal organization separate from the community-scale inventory. Electricity and natural gas use in City facilities, fuel usage from City fleet, and waste disposal from operations and employees are recorded in the municipal inventory and contribute to the organization’s carbon footprint of approximately 60,000 metric tons of CO₂e. The 2017 Municipal Carbon Inventory reported that emissions are down 21 percent from 2005 levels, exceeding the City’s 2020 goal three years in advance despite a significant increase in the population served.

Tracking Progress: ICLEI ClearPath

The City uses ICLEI’s ClearPath to track and report its carbon accounting data. By archiving GHG data in ClearPath, the City can easily store historical records and publish current data to global registries to fulfill reporting requirements to the Global Covenant of Mayors. ClearPath acts as a backup repository of data, storing the data on a cloud software for City staff to easily access without handling multiple file versions. Since ClearPath is utilized across the nation, Fort Collins contributes to a national database and peer group of emissions accountants. The City also uses ClearPath as a final and post third-party quality control check.

GHG Inventory Accounting: New Horizons

The City’s carbon accounting is geared toward ‘in-boundary’ accounting and does not include supply chain emissions. In order to add a supply chain/life-cycle perspective, the City has partnered with the local university and other organizations to begin exploring consumption-based emissions from an accounting and policy perspective. The City believes that local government has a role to play in testing new, comprehensive methods to evaluate the full GHG impacts of municipal and community activities. The City is just beginning to work in this area and is using tools such as EPEAT’s to calculate and communicate the impact of taking actions not normally reflected in its traditional GHG inventory.



Fort Collins’s municipal GHG inventories from 2005-2017 in ClearPath

Tracking IT Impact: EPEAT

The City of Fort Collins utilizes the EPEAT Registry to guide its sustainable purchases of electronics. Since 2013, the City has used the EPEAT Registry for computers, monitors, and multifunction devices. City Staff is able to quantify a portfolio of impacts from work it has been doing for the past nine years, using the EPEAT tool.

As shown in the table below, by choosing more sustainable IT products in 2016, Fort Collins was able to avoid emitting 34.8 metric tons of GHG emissions, equivalent to taking 27 cars off the road for a year. Solid waste reductions from the same IT purchases also resulted in avoiding 1.6 metric tons of solid waste. This is possible through criteria that call for reduced packaging, extended product lifecycle, and ease of disassembly. This information not only provides options for the City to track program impacts but also to communicate more broadly on its successes.

Table: Environmental Benefits of 2016 EPEAT Purchasing Over Products' Lifetime*

| Metric | Amount |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Electricity Saved | 205,200 kWh |
| Greenhouse Gas Reductions | 34.8 metric tons |
| Hazardous Waste Avoided | 528 kg |
| Solid Waste Reduced | 1.6 metric tons |
| Water Pollutant Emissions Prevented | 349 kg |

** Benefits are calculated using the US EPA's Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculators for desktops, notebooks, displays, MFDs, printers, and televisions.*

Conclusion

The City of Fort Collins' sustainability work is supported by tools like ICLEI's ClearPath and the Green Electronic Council's EPEAT. These tools give the City a way to benchmark with other cities, to report on its progress to global platforms, and to explore new techniques in carbon accounting. The City is proud to have reduced their municipal emissions by 21 percent and meet the 2020 goal three years early.

“Cities across the world are leading the way towards a healthy, inclusive and sustainable future and it is inspiring to work for a forward-thinking City that excels at leading in this area.”

— Michelle Finchum, City of Fort Collins Municipal Sustainability Coordinator



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