



Mayors Climate Protection Center

Taking Local Action

# Mayors and Climate Protection Best Practices

June 2026

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Winners  
Mayors' Climate Protection Awards



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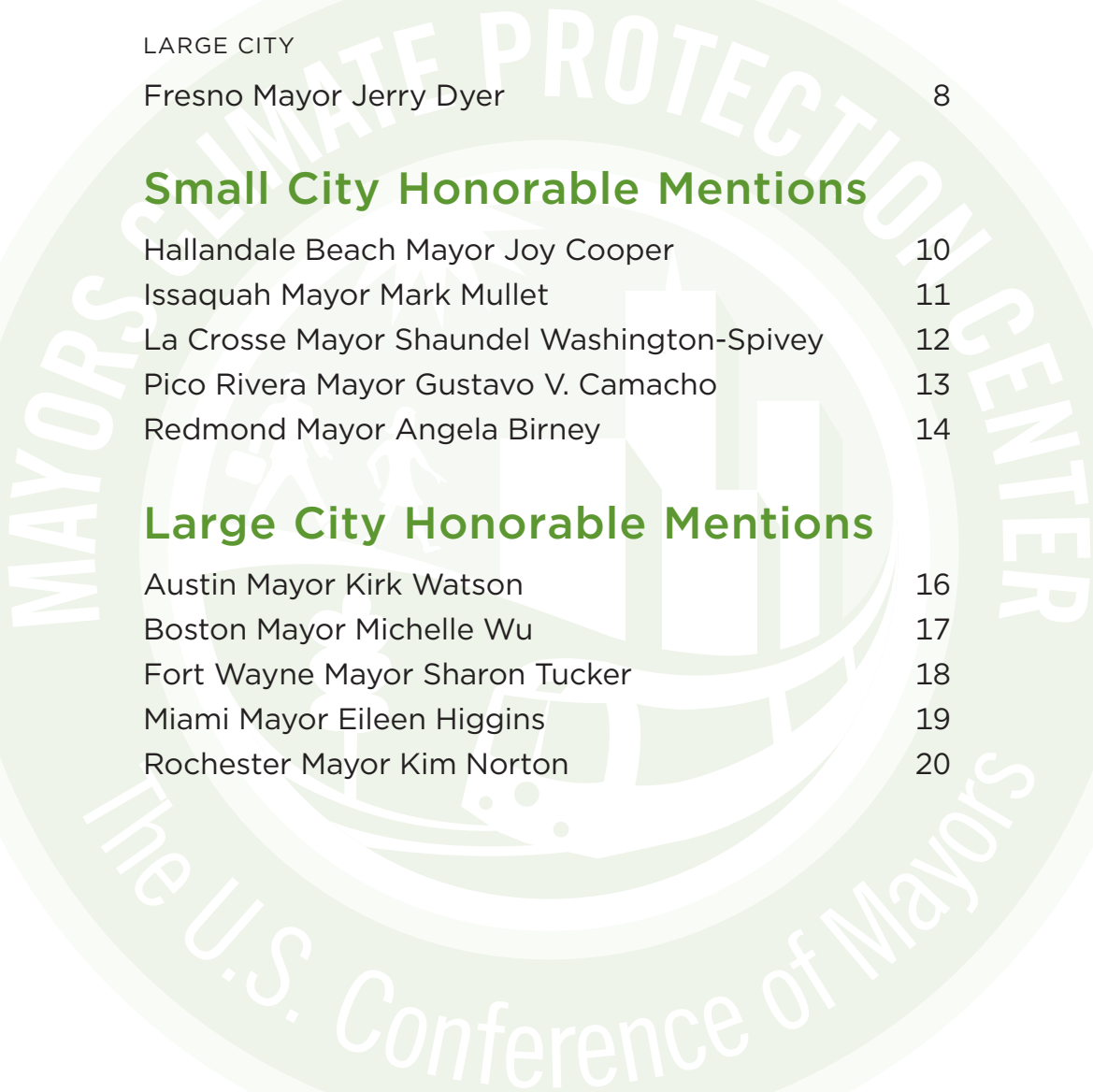
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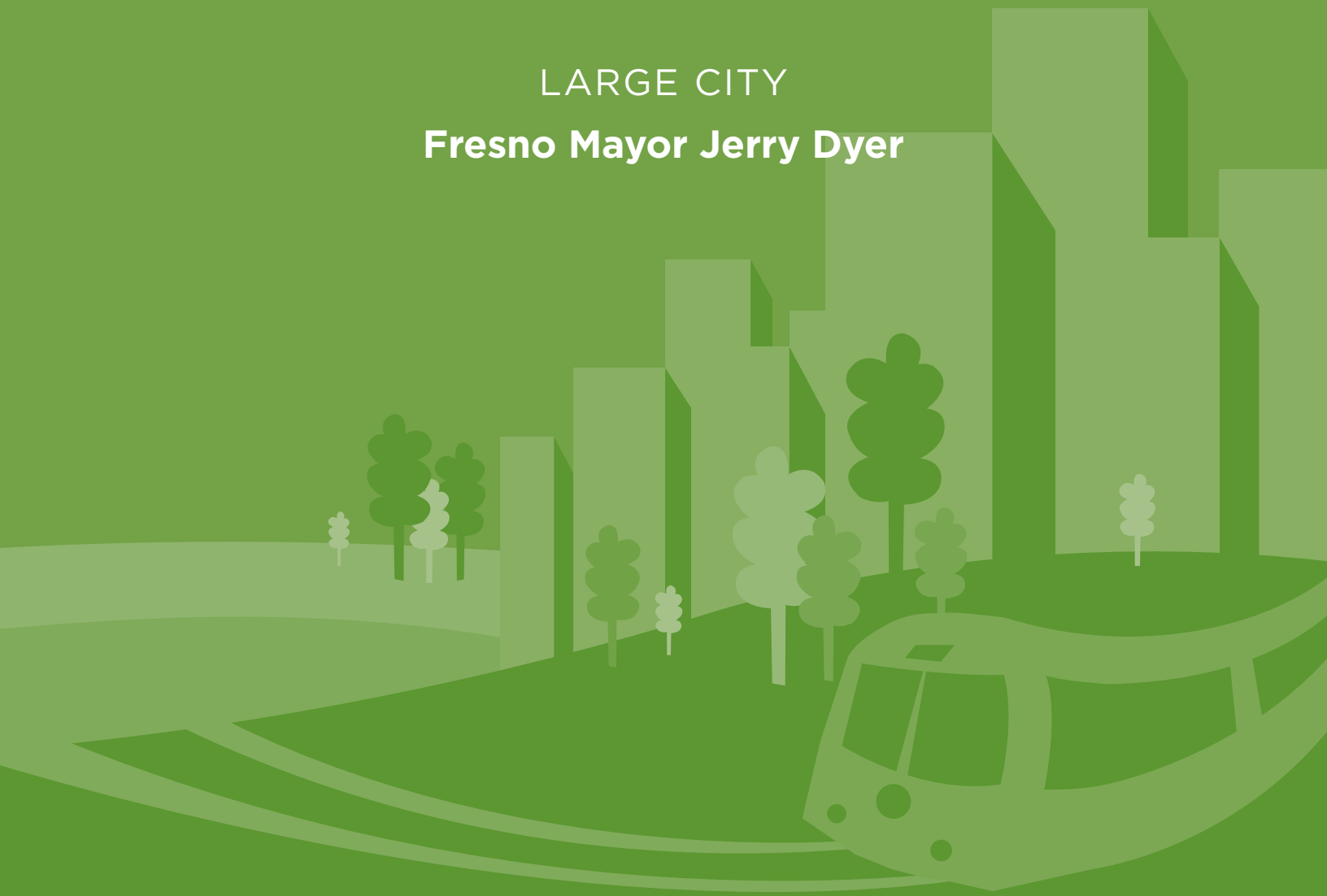
# First Place Award Winners

SMALL CITY

**Alameda Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft**

LARGE CITY

**Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer**



# Alameda Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

## Community-wide Decarbonization Program

The City of Alameda has implemented a comprehensive, community-wide decarbonization program anchored by Alameda Municipal Power (AMP), the oldest municipal electric utility in California — it was established in 1887! AMP provides 100 percent clean electricity at rates 44.5 percent lower than neighboring investor-owned utilities, saving customers an estimated \$63.6 million in 2026.

Key components of the program include: carbon-free electricity since 2020; AMP rebates for electric appliances (heat pumps, induction cooking, smart thermostats) and transportation (EVs, e-bikes, chargers); reduced permit fees; building code amendments encouraging electrification during remodels and replacements; an interdepartmental electrification working group; expansion of curbside and public EV charging; community outreach such as an annual Home Electrification Fair; and adoption of an Equitable Building Decarbonization Plan and 2025 Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CARP).

As an island for whom sea level rise is an existential threat, there is urgency to reduce emissions. Transportation is Alameda's largest GHG source, followed by natural gas use in buildings. Despite achieving 100 percent clean electricity, fossil fuel use remained a barrier to climate goals. As such, the city acted to accelerate emissions reductions (50 percent by 2030), expand equitable access to clean technologies and EV charging, leverage its municipal utility advantage, capture electrification opportunities during remodels, improve cross-department coordination, and protect residents from fossil fuel price volatility.

The key challenges before the city in reducing emissions were upfront costs, contractor readiness, limited public awareness, equity barriers for renters and low-income households, interdepartmental coordination, and siting EV infrastructure in a built-out city.

The city addressed these by offering AMP rebates and technical assistance; reducing permit fees; adopting supportive building codes; creating an interdepartmental working group; expanding curbside/public charging; and investing in robust outreach, including fairs, workshops, partnerships, and a resident “Electric Coach” program. A public metrics hub tracks progress.

Alameda has achieved a 29 percent reduction in community-wide GHG emissions, even as the island saw growth in residents and employees, staying on track for its 50 percent by 2030 goal. Natural gas use has declined 12 percent since 2005, meeting the 2030 goal five years early.

Transportation emissions are decreasing through EV adoption supported by rebates and charging expansion; 11 percent of registered vehicles are zero-emission (12 percent is the 2030 target). Efficiency and electrification are lowering overall energy use. With 100 percent clean electricity, each electrification measure delivers immediate emissions reductions.

Alameda's program integrates clean electricity, policy, and incentives to address both buildings and transportation. Key innovations include affordability through low rates and rebates; building codes that embed electrification into routine upgrades; a cross-department working group; and a comprehensive EV strategy combining rebates, curbside charging, and public infrastructure. Its equity-centered design ensures renters and underserved communities benefit, creating a scalable model for other cities.

Funding for this initiative combined local, utility, and external sources. AMP funds appliance and EV rebates using utility revenues and Low Carbon Fuel Standard credits. The City supports staffing, policy, and permitting. EV infrastructure is supported by grants and partnerships. This approach allows Alameda to invest locally while leveraging outside funding to scale impact.

Residents now benefit from lower energy and transportation costs, cleaner air, improved home comfort and safety, and greater price stability with increased reliance on electricity rather than fossil fuels. Expanded public EV charging enables broader access to clean transportation, especially for renters. Streamlined processes and coordinated programs improve customer experience and equity.

Alameda's success is driven by its ability to align clean electricity, policy, incentives, and infrastructure to address its largest emissions sources—transportation and buildings. With a 29 percent reduction in GHG emissions already achieved, the City is on track to meet its 50 percent reduction goal by 2030.

By combining utility-led EV charging rebates, public and curbside charging infrastructure, building electrification incentives, and supportive policies, Alameda ensures that all residents can participate in the clean energy transition. This coordinated, equity-focused approach offers a scalable and replicable model for cities nationwide.

# Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer

## Solar and Battery Storage Portfolio

The City of Fresno's Sustainability Division and Department of Public Utilities (DPU), in partnership with ForeFront Power, have implemented a combined 27 megawatt-direct current (MWdc) portfolio of on-site solar energy and battery storage systems at three energy-intensive facilities: the Fresno-Clovis Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility, the Northeast Surface Water Treatment Facility, and the Southeast Surface Water Treatment Facility. The project at the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility is the single largest commercial behind-the-meter solar and battery storage system of its kind in the United States.

The City of Fresno remains committed to implementing its Climate Action Plan, which calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while expanding renewable energy resources that support city operations. At the same time, utility costs have risen significantly in recent years. These challenges underscored the need for innovative, long-term energy solutions.

When tasked with advancing a more sustainable Fresno, city staff faced a significant challenge: implementing these projects without an available capital budget. Through extensive research, strategic partnerships, and innovative problem-solving, DPU successfully designed and delivered these projects with zero out-of-pocket costs to the city. Along the way, the projects encountered a series of challenges, including supply chain disruptions, overseas tariffs impacting energy modules, delays in required utility upgrades, and evolving regulatory requirements related to interconnection procedures. Through strong leadership, collaboration, and persistence from city staff, ForeFront Power, the California Public Utilities Commission, subcontractors, and utility partners, each challenge was successfully overcome.

Combined, these projects will generate approximately 47 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually—enough to power more than 8,000 homes each year. They will also help the City of Fresno avoid more than 26,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, equivalent to removing more than 6,000 gas-powered passenger vehicles from the road each year or planting more than 310,000 trees over the next decade.

Together, the three DPU sites represent 27 MW of solar generation and battery storage capacity. The Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility currently provides a 75 percent energy offset, while the Southeast Surface Water Treatment Facility offsets more than 60 percent of its energy load. In addition, the Northeast Surface Water Treatment Facility is among the first in the nation to utilize pioneering ground-mounted solar technology paired with an automated robotic cleaning system, delivering significant construction efficiencies and long-term energy savings.

This portfolio was developed under a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with ForeFront Power at no upfront cost and without the use of city bond funds. Under the agreement, the city continues to own and operate its facilities while leasing land to ForeFront Power for the solar and battery systems, which the company owns, operates, and maintains on the city's behalf. In return, the city purchases electricity at a fixed, below-market rate locked in for the 20-year term of the agreement.

In addition to reducing the facilities' carbon footprint and improving air quality for Fresno residents, this portfolio significantly lowers operational energy costs by generating renewable energy on-site and storing excess power for use during peak demand periods. These efforts are projected to save taxpayers more than \$120 million by 2045. The projects also created 120 union construction jobs, most of which were filled by members of IBEW Local 100.

In 2007, the City of Fresno established a goal of meeting 50 percent of the energy needs at city-owned facilities through renewable energy by 2025. These DPU projects- combined with the city's solar and battery portfolio at seven additional sites- have increased the city's renewable energy offset from 1.7 percent in 2020 to more than 46 percent in 2026. Coupled with energy-efficiency upgrades at 76 facilities citywide, the city has effectively achieved its 50 percent renewable energy goal. Delivered with zero out-of-pocket costs, these projects will continue providing environmental and financial benefits to the city and its residents for decades to come.

# Small City Honorable Mentions

Population Under 100,000

**Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper**

**Issaquah Mayor Mark Mullet**

**La Crosse Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey**

**Pico Rivera Mayor Gustavo V. Camacho**

**Redmond Mayor Angela Birney**



# Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper

## The Cloud

The Cloud ecosystem brings together electric buses, electric microtransit services, and e-bikes, to provide the community with a seamless, zero-emissions mobility network. Launched in 2024, the Cloud became the first fully electric municipal transit fleet in South Florida. Today, the Cloud operates as a fare-free, citywide transit system powered by nine electric buses that replaced the city's gas-powered fleet. Operating four routes daily, the system features charging infrastructure, real-time tracking, ADA accessible buses equipped with onboard Wi-Fi, cameras and video recorders to support safety and public trust, and connects to schools, jobs, healthcare, shopping, and regional transit, delivering clean, reliable mobility for residents and visitors year-round.

Transportation is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in South Florida. Hallandale Beach identified the need to reduce emissions while addressing mobility gaps, particularly for residents who are dependent on local and regional transit connections. The city also sought to modernize aging infrastructure and align with long-term sustainability and carbon-reduction goals, while ensuring equitable, no-cost access to transportation.

Transitioning to a fully electric transit fleet required significant investment and coordination across funding, partnerships, and operations. The city secured external funding through grants and partnerships at the state, local and federal levels, deployed charging infrastructure, redesigned routes, and integrated new technologies while maintaining uninterrupted service. Staff training, performance monitoring, and interagency coordination were critical and instrumental to ensuring reliability and long-term success. Public outreach and branding supported adoption and trust, turning a major logistical challenge into opportunities for the city and the community we serve.

The Cloud's nine electric buses produce zero tailpipe emissions, completely eliminating direct CO<sub>2</sub>, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Each bus avoids approximately 1,470 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, over its 12-year lifespan, about 122 metric tons annually. Together, the fleet prevents roughly 1,100 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, every year, totaling more than 12,200 metric tons over its service life. They also deliver 30-50 percent fuel savings and up to 40 percent lower maintenance costs compared to diesel buses, reducing overall energy

consumption and operating costs. Additionally, the Cloud improves local air quality and reduces noise pollution, key benefits in urban environments such as Hallandale Beach where conventional bus fleets are a major source of emissions. These benefits enable the city to reinvest savings into service enhancements, extending the impact of the program beyond emissions reductions alone.

The Cloud, in 2024 was the only fully electric municipal transit fleet in South Florida, demonstrating full transit electrification at the municipal level. The system integrates zero-emission buses with real-time tracking, fare-free service, and accessible design, making sustainable transportation practical and widely available. The city further strengthened this system with free on-demand electric micro-transit service that provides first and last mile connections to the Cloud and will soon deploy e-bikes. Together, they create an all-encompassing, zero-emission mobility network. The Cloud's funding and implementation model has created a replicable blueprint for other cities, aligning with FDOT, the city's state partner. Overall, the Cloud represents responsible innovation in climate protection, balancing environmental impact, fiscal stewardship, and community benefit.

The bus fleet cost approximately \$5.9 million, funded through a \$3.4 million FDOT grant, and \$2.5 million city investment, inclusive of \$1.9 million contribution by the Hallandale Beach Community Redevelopment Agency. Operations are supported by Broward County Transportation Surtax funds. This layered funding strategy allowed the city to deliver this transformative service and long-term environmental benefit without burdening taxpayers.

The Cloud does more than cut emissions, it meaningfully improves daily life for residents and visitors alike. It significantly improves local air quality, and creates quieter, more comfortable neighborhoods through its electric fleet. By providing free, reliable transportation, the Cloud connects people to jobs, healthcare, education, and recreation, while reducing our community's transportation costs and reliance on personal vehicles. Paired with first and last mile connection service and e-bikes, it offers seamless, door-to-door mobility. Together, the Cloud ecosystem expands economic opportunities and supports a healthier, more connected community.

# Issaquah Mayor Mark Mullet

## Issaquah Resilience Hub Network

The Issaquah Resilience Hub Network is a city-facilitated program that strengthens community resilience before, during, and after climate-related emergencies.

Developed to address increasing climate impacts and other disruptions, the Resilience Hub Network enhances Issaquah's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from extreme events through a coordinated, community-based approach. Currently, the Resilience Hub Network includes eight resilience hub locations and twelve community partners, forming a distributed system of trusted, neighborhood-based sites. Hubs already operate as community assets year-round and activate during emergencies to provide critical services including safe gathering spaces, resource distribution, and essential information.

Recent achievements in the community include:

- The Issaquah Senior Center, activated as a hub location during recent emergencies, is installing the first commercial microgrid system in Issaquah. This effort will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through renewable energy generation while increasing the facility's operational capacity during power outages.
- Issaquah Highlands Council developed a year-long Emergency Learning Series.
- Providence Point Senior Living Community increased collaboration for services through a memorandum of understanding with nearby senior living facilities.
- The Circle Community Connections hosted a clean air giveaway, distributing fans and filters, to prepare vulnerable community members for wildfire smoke. The organization facilitated community member support and connections to hubs during recent emergencies.

Integrating climate adaptation, equity, and clean energy, the Resilience Hub Network offers a scalable and replicable model for community-driven resilience.

Increasing number of climate impacts—such as wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and power outages—highlight the need for reliable, resilient infrastructure in Issaquah ensuring critical sites remain operational to serve vulnerable populations. At the same time, the city's GHG reduction goals require cleaner energy systems. The Resilience Hub Network unites government, community-based, faith-based, and private partners to deliver accessible, community-centered support during emergencies, with a focus on those most at risk.

The Resilience Hub Network faces challenges associated with organizational capacity constraints and coalition building. The city maintains the role of facilitator, offering flexibility in meeting participation, level of commitment, and providing resources that respond to the needs of partners. The city also supports partners in applying for grants to implement their own projects.

This program goes beyond a single project, creating a network of partners that expands the city's capacity to serve the community. By combining technical assistance, strong partnerships, and proven results, the Resilience Hub Network delivers coordinated support before, during, and after emergencies—while advancing projects that reduce emissions. This program also strengthens community cohesion by building relationships among local organizations, improving coordination, and expanding access to resources. These efforts reduce social isolation, increase preparedness, and ensure that residents, particularly those most at risk, have reliable access to support during emergencies.

# La Crosse Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey

## Accessory Dwelling Unit

La Crosse developed an Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance to allow ADUs on residential properties. ADUs are smaller, independent residential dwelling units on the same lot as a single-family home. The new ordinance allows one accessory unit per land parcel that must comply with all building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fire, health and any other applicable codes. Accessory units in La Crosse are not allowed to exceed 900 square feet or the square feet of the associated home.

The 2024 ADU Design Competition solicited architectural designs for affordable, sustainable, and/or universal solutions to meet the new ADU Ordinance and for people seeking to explore innovative housing alternatives in the community.

Competition designs are to be cost-effective, environmentally responsible and energy efficient. The ADU's must be detached, sustainable, innovative, universal design, have clarity of circulation and spatial organization. ADU should have sleeping, living/working, cooking, bathroom, and storage spaces. Designs will have imaginative solutions for comfortable-to-live in interiors and have materials and methods of construction for cost estimates.

A robust city-wide conversation was held about the creation of the ADU ordinance. We heard from residents who wanted to build ADU's in their backyards for their parents and couldn't because city ordinances prevented them. Working with residents informally and hearing testimony at City Commission meetings helped lead the momentum for this important zoning change.

The resulting design concepts reside in a library on the city website and are available for residents, developers, and architects to use. Inquiries are already coming in.

To realize a successful program, months were spent behind the scenes discussing the program with groups like the Neighborhood Revitalization Commission and the Community and Economic Development Committee. We wanted to ensure broad support before bringing a draft ordinance to the City Council. There were no challenges as we had spent the time educating the community and answering their questions.

Over time, property owners will save money as the new buildings are more energy efficient. The city will avoid extending utilities to new development while increasing per capital capacity.

La Crosse hosted a ADU Design Competition with multiple partners including University of Wisconsin Madison Architecture School, AIA Wisconsin, and AARP Wisconsin. The Competition targeted and encouraged students, emerging professionals, and experienced architects to submit entries. It generated excitement for the possibilities of multi-generational living that is becoming more of a norm with families in a house with parents or adult children living on the same property. Opportunities for housing to be more affordable, accessible and have increased community density that aligns with walkability and transportation options.

The ADU Design Competition was funded by a \$19,800 AARP Community Challenge Grant with in-kind labor and assistance from the City of La Crosse and partners.

The ADU Program is in its infancy. The city approved ADU's through an ordinance. Architects provided concepts for homeowners, developers and architects to use.

# Pico Rivera Mayor Gustavo V. Camacho

## Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

The City of Pico Rivera's Office of Sustainability and Energy leads a comprehensive, citywide approach to climate action through implementation of its Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). This office oversees PRIME (Pico Rivera Innovative Municipal Energy), the city's Community Choice Aggregation program, and advances initiatives in renewable energy, electrification, waste reduction, and community resilience. This centralized structure ensures that CAAP strategies are translated into coordinated programs and measurable outcomes.

As a disadvantaged community, Pico Rivera faces disproportionate environmental and economic challenges, including high energy costs and climate vulnerability. The city recognized that achieving its CAAP goals required a dedicated department to coordinate implementation, prioritize equity, and deliver tangible community benefits.

Key challenges included limited local resources, regulatory complexity, and the need to align multiple departments under a unified climate strategy. The city addressed these by establishing the Office as a central hub, leveraging partnerships, and embedding CAAP actions into daily municipal operations to ensure accountability and long-term implementation.

The office advances CAAP strategies by expanding access to renewable energy, supporting building and transportation electrification, and improving energy efficiency. Through PRIME and targeted programs such as solar-plus-storage for income-qualified households, the city reduces reliance on fossil fuels, lowers peak demand, and achieves measurable greenhouse gas reductions aligned with CAAP targets.

Pico Rivera is among a limited number of small cities with a dedicated Office of Sustainability that directly administers both a CAAP and a Community Choice Aggregation program. This structure enables a nimble, implementation-focused team capable of rapidly deploying CAAP measures and developing responsive, community-driven solutions. The city's leadership has been recognized through consecutive Gateway Cities Council of Governments Energy Action Awards at the Platinum level, an honor reserved for the most comprehensive and high-performing energy and climate programs in the region. This recognition, along with selection as the 2026 SCAG Sustainability Award recipient for Climate Leadership, reflects the competitiveness, scale, and effectiveness of Pico Rivera's approach.

Implementation is supported through a combination of PRIME revenues, grants, and strong partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs). PRIME operates as an enterprise program funded through electricity generation revenues, enabling reinvestment into CAAP-aligned initiatives without reliance on the General Fund. The city works closely with CBOs to leverage external funding, deliver programs, and expand outreach, ensuring resources are efficiently deployed and reach underserved residents. Additional funding sources, including state programs such as SGIP, further support distributed energy resources and equity-focused initiatives.

The office delivers direct, CAAP-driven benefits by lowering energy costs, expanding access to clean technologies, and strengthening community resilience. Income-qualified programs provide significant bill savings and backup power, while broader initiatives improve environmental quality and public health. By centralizing implementation, the city ensures that climate action is practical, equitable, and directly beneficial to residents.

# Redmond Mayor Angela Birney

## Advancing Climate and Housing Goals Through Residential Decarbonization

The City of Redmond recognizes that building new housing is only part of the housing solution. The city also has a responsibility to preserve and improve existing affordable homes, so they remain efficient, healthy, and resilient for the residents who live there. Through Redmond's regional decarbonization programming, the city worked with partners to decarbonize 22 permanently affordable homes in the Patterson Park townhome complex at no cost to residents, exemplifying how Redmond is advancing climate goals while strengthening housing.

The installations were completed through Energy Smart Eastside (ESE), a program led collectively by six Eastside cities. The program helps households transition from fossil fuel-based heating to high-efficiency electric heat pumps, reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. In Redmond, ESE places a strong emphasis on equitable access to these upgrades, particularly in affordable housing. Other key partners contributing to the success of the project were Habitat for Humanity, Puget Sound Energy, and private-sector organizations.

Residents now benefit from efficient heating and access to cooling, improving comfort during extreme heat and smoke events. Upgraded systems reduce energy costs, enhance indoor air quality, and increase housing stability. The project also strengthened community trust by delivering tangible improvements quickly and collaboratively.

This residential decarbonization programming has resulted in the retrofitting of more than 173 Redmond homes with energy efficient heat pumps, with 100 of those being no cost installs in low-income homes and affordable housing properties. Across the regional program, Energy Smart Eastside has supported more than 1,000 households in transitioning to efficient electric systems.

Key challenges to advancing this initiative include limited funding, fragmented utility incentive programs, and the complexity of coordinating upgrades in occupied multifamily housing. These were addressed by building a strong regional delivery model over time including establishing trusted partnerships with utilities, contractors, nonprofits, and state agencies. For Patterson Park, this groundwork allowed partners to quickly align roles, layer funding sources, and conduct effective resident outreach through trusted messengers. As a result, the project moved from initial conversation to full installation in just over three months.

The Patterson Park project combined funding from multiple sources, including City of Redmond funds (\$218,000), a Washington State Department of Commerce HEAR grant (\$100,000), utility rebates from Puget Sound Energy (over \$230,000), and contributions from private sector partners. Total project cost was approximately \$571,300, with installations provided at zero cost to residents.

Redmond is a rapidly growing city facing rising housing costs alongside increasing climate impacts, including extreme heat and wildfire smoke. Many existing affordable homes rely on aging gas systems and lack cooling, putting residents at higher risk. The city prioritizes programming recognizing that climate action must also advance housing stability, health, and resilience. ESE was created to bridge that gap by delivering emissions reductions while improving living conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Patterson Park and Energy Smart Eastside demonstrate how cities can align climate action with housing priorities. By investing early in partnerships and delivery systems, Redmond was able to act quickly, stretch limited resources, and deliver high-impact, equitable outcomes.

# Large City Honorable Mentions

Population Over 100,000

**Austin Mayor Kirk Watson**

**Boston Mayor Michelle Wu**

**Fort Wayne Mayor Sharon Tucker**

**Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins**

**Rochester Mayor Kim Norton**



# Austin Mayor Kirk Watson

## Austin Climate Implementation Plan

Austin's Climate Implementation Plan is a citywide, two-year action plan that builds off the 2021 Climate Equity Plan with 46 "shovel-ready" actions, complete with greenhouse gas reduction estimates. This implementation plan is part of a broader Comprehensive Climate Implementation Program that sets governance, accountability, and collaboration pathways to deliver near-term emissions reductions while advancing equity. Key elements include Austin's Climate Cabinet, a Climate Action and Resilience Team (CART), project-based "Delivery Teams," annual departmental work plans, and a public-facing dashboard to track progress, costs, and greenhouse gas impacts.

While Austin has set ambitious goals in its Climate Equity Plan, the city identified a gap between long-term goals and near-term implementation. Departments needed clearer direction, coordination, and accountability to move from planning to implementation. Rapid population growth, rising emissions, ongoing funding challenges, and increasing climate risks reinforced the need for a structured, cross-departmental approach to deliver measurable outcomes by 2027 while ensuring benefits reach all communities.

The primary challenge in advancing this two-year action plan was aligning multiple departments, funding streams, and priorities into a unified implementation framework. Departments operate with different directives, timelines, and constraints. Austin addressed this by establishing a Climate Cabinet composed of single points of contact across departments. The Climate Cabinet provides strategic oversight and direction on the city's climate goals, establishes and monitors project-based "Delivery Teams," and manages the Climate Action & Resilience Team, a large, inclusive group of city staff coming together to solve climate challenges and network across the organization. Building internal capacity and consensus was critical to ensuring the program could be operationalized citywide.

The program is in early implementation, with foundational systems already in place to drive emissions reductions. If fully implemented, the plan is projected to reduce emissions by up to 2.3 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2040. Major reductions come from transportation and land use

(1.59 million MT), transportation electrification (324,300 MT), and sustainable buildings (247,200 MT). Early actions, including fleet electrification and infrastructure investments, are already contributing to reduced fuel use and emissions. Two of the actions that have the highest potential to reduce greenhouse gases were initiated through Council action and are currently underway. One of these projects, "Install Solar PV on City Facilities," would be among the largest municipal, multi-site solar project in the U.S., once completed.

This effort was among the first in the U.S. to operationalize a climate plan into a detailed, two-year implementation framework that integrates emissions modeling, cost analysis, and equity scoring across all actions. The use of C40 prioritization tools and Austin's Equity Tool ensures that each action delivers measurable climate and community benefits. The broader program complements progress on the plan through several cutting-edge coordination bodies (e.g. Climate Cabinet, CART, and Delivery Teams), creating a scalable, replicable approach to addressing climate action within city government.

The program was developed through the City of Austin's municipal budget. Implementation is supported through a combination of local and external funding sources, including the city's General Fund, federal grants (such as U.S. Department of Transportation funding), enterprise department budgets, the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund, and anticipated philanthropic and future funding opportunities aligned with specific actions.

The plan's actions improve quality of life by prioritizing cleaner air, reducing emissions, safer mobility, and climate resilience. Investments in electric vehicles, walkable infrastructure, and green space would reduce pollution and support public health. Urban tree canopy expansion and green infrastructure mitigate heat and flooding risks, while increasing biodiversity. Workforce initiatives create green jobs, while efficiency measures lower long-term costs. Equity-focused implementation ensures benefits, such as improved air quality, transportation access, and climate resilience, are directed to historically underserved communities.

# Boston Mayor Michelle Wu

## Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance

The Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) is a local law that requires large building owners to report their buildings' annual energy and water consumption as well as comply with declining emissions standards. All covered BERDO buildings are expected to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Although BERDO regulates only 5 percent of Boston's buildings, this small fraction of properties emits more carbon than all the cars, trucks, and trains traveling in Boston in any one year. BERDO is the highest-impact emissions reduction tool to meet Boston's climate action goals.

To help building owners achieve emissions reductions, the city established the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund (EEIF), an annual grant program that funds projects that reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions generated by large buildings, with priority given to projects that benefit Boston's low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Since 2024, the EEIF has allocated seven grants totaling over \$1.5 million to support equitable building decarbonization in Boston.

As BERDO is one of the first Building Performance Standards (BPS), it includes many first-of-its-kind elements. Developing regulations was particularly challenging, as it required weighing technical and policy considerations across a wide range of topics. To develop successful regulations, the city engaged technical experts, the regulated community, and community organizations. The city continues to deeply engage with constituents and update policy and regulations to respond to unexpected challenges discovered during implementation.

This city ordinance incentivizes building owners to reduce energy use, phase out fossil fuels, and obtain renewable energy. This has already resulted in innovative projects, including a Boston Housing Authority project to pilot new

window heat pumps, deep energy retrofits in affordable housing, and geothermal projects in dense urban environments. To date, BERDO building owners have signed 22 power purchase agreements that led to the development of 2 GW of new solar and wind capacity across the US. This amounts to around 2,300 GWh of renewable energy per year. The projects funded by the EEIF since 2024 will collectively reduce around 723.6 mtonCO<sub>2e</sub> per year.

BERDO is recognized as one of the few BPS with specific environmental justice mandates. This includes the BERDO Review Board, a nine-member, community-driven board that oversees implementation of the ordinance. At least two-thirds of the Board must be nominated by community-based organizations led by local residents. The Board makes decisions over flexibility measures, policy updates, and enforcement to ensure all Bostonians benefit from BERDO. The ordinance authorizes the Board to make all funding decisions for the EEIF, thereby ensuring funds respond to community priorities.

The city has developed and implemented BERDO through the city's operating budget, federal grant funding such as American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG), and philanthropy, including the Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge. The EEIF was initially seeded with \$3.5 million from the city's operating budget; going forward, it will be financed through BERDO Alternative Compliance Payments and fines.

Taking action now to reduce carbon emissions will ensure that Boston can be a thriving city for generations to come. BERDO will continue to play a key role in improving air quality, reducing pollution, helping mitigate climate change, and supporting local green jobs.

# Fort Wayne Mayor Sharon Tucker

## Heat Mapping and Neighborhood Intervention

Under the leadership of Mayor Sharon Tucker, the City of Fort Wayne implemented a two-phase climate initiative combining citywide heat mapping and targeted neighborhood intervention. In partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the city collected its first comprehensive heat and air quality dataset and translated findings into community-driven improvements in the East Central Neighborhood, including initial installation of three strategically located, shaded, art-integrated bus shelters.

Extreme heat is a growing public health threat, yet Fort Wayne lacked localized data to identify where impacts were most severe. Federal partnerships and neighborhood collaboration revealed both a critical data gap and disproportionate vulnerability in areas like the East Central Neighborhood, driving the need for targeted, evidence-based action.

The initiative required aligning multiple federal partners, local agencies, and community stakeholders while engaging 40 resident volunteers in data collection and over 70 residents in planning. The city overcame these challenges by translating complex climate data into clear, community-supported actions.

The program reduces emissions by increasing transit use through shaded, more accessible bus infrastructure that improves rider comfort. By making public transportation a more viable option, the city reduces reliance on single-occupancy vehicles while addressing localized heat exposure.

This initiative creates a direct pipeline from hyperlocal climate data to implementation. By combining resident-collected data, federal modeling, and community-driven design, Fort Wayne developed a replicable model that enables cities to move from data to action quickly and equitably.

Citywide heat mapping, equipment, and analysis were supported through federal partnership with NOAA, HHS, and HUD, with additional support from the Foellinger Foundation and Fort Wayne Metals for volunteer engagement. Neighborhood planning was funded by the EPA, with city staff supporting implementation through the Community Development Division and Office of Sustainability.

Residents benefit from increased awareness of heat-related health risks, publicly accessible heat and air-quality data, and infrastructure that reduces exposure to extreme heat at transit stops in a neighborhood with identified heat islands. The initiative engaged 40 volunteers, 20+ youth, and 50+ adult residents, strengthening community ownership through engagement and local art while equipping stakeholders with tools to address climate impacts.

# Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins

## Building Efficiency 305

The City of Miami's Building Efficiency 305 (BE305) program helps residents and businesses reduce utility costs while supporting the city's climate and affordability goals. The program requires multifamily and commercial buildings larger than 20,000 square feet to annually benchmark and report their energy and water use. Using the free ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool, building owners input utility data to track energy consumption and costs, measure greenhouse gas emissions, compare performance against similar properties, and identify opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce operating expenses.

First proposed in the region's resilience strategy, the BE305 program was born from collaboration between the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, and the City Energy Project. Buildings can waste up to 30 percent of energy and water due to inefficiencies and poor operations. The city's BE305 program is designed to improve energy efficiency and water conservation through benchmarking, tracking, and retuning in public and private buildings.

One of the initial challenges in implementing the BE305 program was developing a comprehensive and accurate inventory of buildings 20,000 square feet and larger within the City. Data provided by Miami-Dade County served as a starting point, but additional verification was necessary. City staff validated building addresses and square footage using the Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser's public database, while the city's internal permitting software was used to identify buildings constructed after 2013. Once finalized, the inventory was imported into the program's reporting dashboard to initiate the program.

The year 2023 marked the program's first year of compliance for buildings over 100,000 sq. ft. Buildings between 50,000 sq. ft. - 99,999 sq. ft. were required to comply in 2024 and buildings over 20,000 sq. ft. complied in 2025. These years established a baseline for energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2024, total energy use was 1,833,222,841.42 kWh and total greenhouse gas emissions were 657,895.04 MTCO<sub>2</sub>.

In 2025, total energy use was 1,660,694,035.96 kWh and total greenhouse gas emissions were 583,227.74 MTCO<sub>2</sub>. This yielded a 9 percent decrease in energy use and 11 percent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from 2024 to 2025.

The city's program is the second of its kind in Florida, and the first to include retuning and fines in the ordinance. Every five years building owners are required to perform retuning on the base building systems to ensure they are maintained, cleaned, and repaired. The owner corrects, through low-cost adjustments, deficiencies identified during the retuning period. All properties in good standing with compliance are eligible for a permit fee credit to cover city building permit fees related to professional services/soft costs ranging from \$5,000 for smaller buildings to \$25,000 for larger buildings.

BE305 is funded primarily through the city's general fund, totaling \$750,000 for the initial four years. The program is funded in the Department of Building's operating budget for the next four years. Funding is allocated primarily for a benchmarking software geared towards helping municipalities track benchmarking data for public and private buildings, real-time visualization and mapping tools, 24/7 multilingual help center, robust data privacy, and a comprehensive list of functionalities that enable the city to easily notify owners of covered properties, provide training on how to benchmark, track compliance, and ensure proper enforcement.

Building owners benefit from increased asset value, improved operating margins and tenant retention, and the ability to distinguish their properties from similar buildings in the market. Tenants benefit from improved indoor air quality, increased comfort and satisfaction, and lower utility bills that help reduce energy burdens. Through BE305, the City of Miami is demonstrating how building benchmarking policies can deliver measurable environmental, economic, and quality-of-life benefits for the community.

# Rochester Mayor Kim Norton

## Thermal Energy Network

The City of Rochester, Minnesota implemented the first active thermal energy network in the state of Minnesota, connecting four landmark civic facilities Rochester Public Library, Mayo Civic Center, Rochester Art Center, and Rochester Civic Theatre. The \$25.5 million, multi-phase project was completed between May 2023 and December 2025 and centered on installing Darcy Solutions geothermal submerged closed-loop heat exchangers beneath an urban setting. The project electrified each facility's central heating and cooling plant using simultaneous heating/cooling heat pumps and created a shared thermal energy network that allows waste heat to be exchanged between facilities, dramatically improving overall system efficiency.

Rochester recognized that these municipal facilities relied on heating and cooling systems that were both inefficient and incompatible with the city's long-term climate and energy goals. Most critically, these four civic facilities had previously been served by a district steam system that was failing and planned for decommissioning, creating an urgent need to identify a replacement solution. Rather than simply replacing like-for-like with a fossil fuel-based system, the city seized this moment as an opportunity to transition these facilities to a sustainable, renewable alternative. As anchor institutions in the heart of downtown, these four civic facilities represented a significant source of municipal greenhouse gas emissions, and the impending loss of the steam system created a burning platform to act decisively. The city identified an opportunity to modernize these facilities, reduce emissions, lower long-term operating costs, and establish a replicable model for clean energy infrastructure all while aligning with our municipal utility provider's goals of achieving fully renewable energy by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2040.

The project presented substantial technical and logistical challenges. Installing geothermal assets in a dense urban environment required careful coordination to work within the constraints of crowded downtown utilities with limited space for drilling and equipment staging. All four facilities remained operational throughout construction, requiring the team to phase work carefully to avoid disrupting public services and

civic events at high-traffic venues. Integrating new electrified heating and cooling plants into existing building infrastructure, each with its own unique mechanical systems, added further complexity. These challenges were overcome through meticulous project planning, close collaboration with Darcy Solutions, our design team at Salas O'Brien and our construction manager Kraus Anderson and Benike Construction to create a phased construction approach spanning nearly three years.

The thermal energy network is projected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 2.3 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. This reduction is achieved through the elimination of fossil fuel-based heating and cooling at four major civic facilities, replaced by highly efficient simultaneous heat/cool electric heat pumps drawing on geothermal energy. The interconnected network further amplifies these savings by allowing waste heat generated at one facility to be recovered and used at another, minimizing energy loss. Critically, because the system is fully electrified, emissions reductions will compound over time as Rochester's municipal utility provider transitions to fully renewable energy by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2040 meaning the system will approach net-zero operational emissions along with Rochester Public Utilities energy production transition.

This project is the first active thermal energy network of its kind in the state of Minnesota, representing a genuine first-in-state innovation in clean energy infrastructure. Rather than treating each facility as an isolated energy consumer, Rochester took a networked approach linking four civic buildings so they can share thermal energy with one another. This district-scale thinking maximizes the efficiency of each geothermal installation and creates a platform that can be expanded to additional buildings in the future. The use of Darcy Solutions submerged closed-loop heat exchangers in a dense urban environment also demonstrates that geothermal thermal networks are viable in built-out city cores, not just greenfield developments a model with significant implications for cities across the Midwest and beyond.

The total program budget was \$25.5 million, financed through four primary sources:

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT	% OF TOTAL
Abatement Bonds	\$11.4M	44.7%
Direct Pay IRA Tax Credits (est.)	\$9.1M	35.7%
Destination Medical Center EDA	\$4.2M	16.5%
Congressionally-Directed Spending/U.S. DOE	\$2.0M	7.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$25.5M</b>	<b>100%</b>

Abatement bonds represent the largest single source of funding, allowing the city to finance climate-beneficial capital projects and repay them through future energy savings. Direct Pay IRA Tax Credits leverage Inflation Reduction Act provisions that make federal clean energy tax credits accessible to tax-exempt municipal entities, significantly reducing the net cost of the project. The DMC EDA contribution reflects the role these civic facilities play in supporting Rochester’s broader economic development and destination medicine strategy. Federal DOE funding validated the national significance of this first-in-state initiative.

The thermal energy network improves quality of life for Rochester residents in several meaningful ways. First, by reducing operating costs for four heavily used civic facilities, the city is able to reinvest the projected \$600,000 in annual savings toward asset preservation rather than energy bills. Second, the 2.3 million pounds of annual CO<sub>2</sub> reduction contributes directly to cleaner air and a healthier environment for the community. Third, the fully electrified heating and cooling systems position these facilities to achieve near-zero operational emissions as Rochester’s utility transitions to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2040 meaning the community’s civic heart will be powered by clean energy for generations to come. Finally, the project preserves and modernizes beloved community institutions the Rochester Public Library, Rochester Civic Theatre, Rochester Art Center, and Mayo Civic Center ensuring they remain vibrant, sustainable anchors of Rochester’s downtown for decades ahead.

The Rochester thermal energy network represents more than an infrastructure upgrade it is a proof of concept for how other cities can take bold, systemic action on climate through innovative financing and collaborative partnerships. By leveraging new federal tools like Direct Pay IRA tax credits alongside local mechanisms like abatement bonds and regional economic development investment, Rochester has demonstrated a replicable financing model that does not rely on any single funding source. The project also reflects Rochester’s unique position as a city with outsized ambitions: home to the Mayo Clinic and a globally recognized destination for medicine and innovation, Rochester is equally committed to leading on sustainability and climate resilience. This project embodies that commitment.





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