

City of New Rochelle
Department of Development

MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

THRU: CHARLES B. STROME, III, CITY MANAGER

FROM: LUIZ C. ARAGON, COMMISSIONER OF DEVELOPMENT

CC: WILLIAM ZIMMERMANN; ALEXANDER TERGIS; PAUL VACCA; JAMES MORAN; SCOTT PICKUP; NINA ARRON

DATE: December 7, 2015

SUBJECT: GreeNR 2015 Annual Progress Memo

Overview

This memo outlines 2015 progress of GreeNR broken out by initiative, followed by metrics where applicable.

Background

Progress is most easily made when the GreeNR Initiatives fit within existing City priorities. The Comprehensive Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program updates will further embed GreeNR goals into standard City policies and procedures over the next year. A series of sustainability meetings was held as part of the Comprehensive Plan process and the resulting goals will become part of the overall recommendations of the Plan.

The GreeNR plan recognizes that recommended actions are “resource dependent” and that “judgments about whether, how and when to proceed will be guided in part by organizational capacity and competing priorities.” As a result, progress on some items is ahead of the timetable anticipated when GreeNR was adopted while progress on others is behind schedule. GreeNR was intended to be an organic plan, so adjustments in the focus and timing of initiatives is entirely appropriate.

Strategies to assist implementation include:

- Imbed the City’s sustainability goals in policy documents and procedures wherever feasible.
- Build on related initiatives led by other organizations / agencies.
- Partner with other organizations / agencies.
- Develop systems to enable staff to track and measure progress.

These strategies should reduce the resource constraints noted above to assist with ongoing implementation.

2015 Highlights

LED lighting is being installed city wide with an expected cost saving to the City of \$638,000 annually.

New Rochelle's largest solar array of 75,000 square feet has been installed at 30 Pine Street on the roof of Pearlgreen Corporation.

Four Nissan Leaf electric cars have been added to the City's fleet and two electric charging stations have been installed.

The Community Vine Removal Committee is in its second year under the guidance of the Parks Department. Work is continuing at Ward Acres protecting against tree loss due to vines.

Grow Lincoln Community Garden has been expanded and 700 linear feet of irrigation installed.

Issues

2015 has seen an emphasis on measuring progress of GreeNR initiatives. While the GreeNR plan includes progress metrics with 2011 baselines, many of these are not currently tracked or recorded. It is unclear how most of these baselines were formulated making it hard to apply consistent measurements. In addition, changes in some work processes have complicated tracking. In general, the attempt made this year to track metrics has been time consuming, incomplete, and for the reasons outlined above, inaccurate.

Recommendations

Tracking progress with any degree of accuracy will require investment in:

- systems to both gather and collate data into a repository/project management software to track and run reports
- secure funding to hire consultants to annually gather metrics, find and utilize external resources such as ICLEI to calculate greenhouse gas emissions and other metrics, and provide a repository for gathered data
- completing the annual update in Q1 for the prior year rather than Q4 to have access to a full calendar year of data for analysis and reporting
- amending metrics and setting priorities. GreeNR is broad, some metrics cannot be tracked, staffing does not allow progress across all initiatives, and some initiatives have lost relevance over time. Meetings have been held in 2015 and some priorities set, and two skilled volunteers are currently working on further analysis and recommendations as is a group of Fordham University students

Progress

Part 1: Energy and Climate

Reduce local energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while transitioning to renewable sources of energy and adapting to probable climate change.

1.1 Green Building Standards. New York State may adopt new standards and New Rochelle will follow the State's lead rather than creating local law.

Green Building Standards	Baseline 2011	GreeNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Local Large Green Building Law Adopted	0	0	0

1.2 Exterior Lighting Efficiency. DPW has begun an LED street lighting replacement program scheduled to be completed by mid-2016. It is expected that this will reduce street lighting costs by \$638,000 (\$270,000 net savings) annually inclusive servicing the Lumen Solutions loan.

Exterior Lighting Efficiency	Baseline 2011	GreeNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Number of exterior light fixtures replaced	<1%	30%	15%
CO2 reduction (metric tons)	0	322	279 (will increase to 1862 annually when project is completed)
Kilowatt hours reduction			416,632 (will increase to 2,777,552 when project is completed)
Reduced energy costs for exterior lighting (thousands)	0	\$164	\$95.6 (will increase to \$638 annually when project is completed)

1.3 Municipal Building Efficiency. Energy efficient windows at City Hall have been fully installed on the ground and first floors.

A volunteer has worked with DPW to analyze current energy usage. All of City Hall is on a single meter making analysis impossible by department or zones. A wind/solar pilot is possible in 2016 but nothing else is planned for next year.

Municipal Building Efficiency	Baseline 2011	GreeNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Municipal buildings audited (44 total)	3	3	3
Suitable municipal roofs painted white and/or solar installed	0	10%	2% Hugh Doyle solar

1.4 Green Fleet. Four Nissan Leaf electric cars have been leased at a deep discount and added to the Development Department fleet. Two charging station have been installed, one at City Hall and one at New Roc garage.

Excluding police and fire, the City’s fleet has improved fuel efficiency by approximately 9.25% since 2010.

1.5 Renewable Energy Generation. The metric for this initiative is the adoption of a public land renewable energy plan. No progress has been made and nothing is planned for 2016.

1.6 GreeNR Seal. This initiative is resource heavy both to develop and to administer. There are programs already developed such as LEED that the City can promote though its code and policies. For this reason, the GreeNR Seal will not be pursued.

1.7 Mid & High Rise Building Campaign. This initiative is being considered in conjunction with Energize Westchester. In addition, a group of Fordham students is currently undertaking a class project developing a ‘toolkit’ for mid and high rise property owners and managers.

1.8 Efficiency and Conservation Loans. The City is partnering with other organizations/programs including Energize NY, Solarize NY and Sustainable Westchester.

Part 2. Resource Conservation & Waste Reduction

Cut waste generation, improve recycling rates, encourage conservation and efficient use of water and other natural resources.

2.9 Municipal Building Waste Reduction. The recommendation for this initiative was to establish a City Green Team, this is not being pursued. Recycling bins have been added to basement meeting rooms but disappear soon after being placed despite being clearly labelled with the room number. Recycling rates in municipal buildings are not tracked. No funds have been available to undertake recycling audits of municipal buildings. Recycling bins for bottles and cans not provided.

Municipal Building Waste Reduction	Baseline 2011	GreeNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Municipal buildings audited	0	44	0

2.10 Residential Recycling Campaign.

The City does not have the means to weigh recycling and waste, the numbers below have been provided by the county. It is expected that the total tonnage of leaves hauled will go up this year due to late leaf fall, and late garden cleanup leading to other yard waste being mixed in with leaves. The cut off for green waste has been traditionally October 10. Last year and this year the cut off was extended to Oct 30 due to the mild weather. This may need to be extended further as this year as lawns were still being cut well into November.

The City’s cell phone recycling program has been discontinued.

Residential Recycling Campaign	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2014 data provided by the county
Recycling rate comingled and paper	30%	35%	49% (this includes other categories including e-waste, yard waste, bulk metal etc.) 5455 tons
Yard waste	-	-	20,623 tons
Disposed waste			29,253

2.11 Public Area Recycling. DPW is working with the BID to implement public area recycling in the Downtown. A pilot is in progress at Pinebrook ball field and this may be extended in 2016 but is limited by the need for a vehicle for pickup.

2.12 Municipal Green Purchasing. Mulch mow practices have been implemented for City properties city wide. Chemical use in City parks and streets has been reduced.

Municipal Green Purchasing	Baseline 2011	Actual Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015 (YTD)
Park Mulching Program	750 cubic yards	360 cubic yards	130 cubic yards

2.13 Water Use and Wastewater Reduction.

Metrics for this initiative are listed as inflow and infiltration (I&I), lateral lines repaired, and municipal water use. Total flow of City I&I cannot be tracked as multiple communities flow into the same facility. A bid is expected to be issued in spring/summer 2016 to reline some sections of pipe. Developers of large projects are also required to contribute to I&I improvements.

A local law is expected to go before council in 2016 requiring owners to inspect and repair laterals when selling.

Whenever toilets in municipal buildings are replaced, low flow units are installed. The number of replacements is not tracked.

2.14 Household Composting. Composting standards and guidelines will be added to the City website in 2016. No further composting initiatives are planned for 2016.

2.15 Regional Composting Study. There is a long term goal to consider a municipal composting program. This is an ongoing discussion with the county and municipalities.

Part 3. Ecology, Biodiversity & Public Health.

Preserve New Rochelle’s natural beauty, stabilize vulnerable habitats, improve air and water quality, limit or reverse the incident of flooding and deforestation, and promote beneficial lifestyles and practices in order to achieve a healthy ecosystem, healthy neighborhoods, and healthy families.

3.16 Sound, Lake and Stream Water Quality. Fountains in Beechmont Lake, and the twin lakes at Huguenot Park help aerate and improve the water quality in compliance with EPA standards. Beechmont and Paine Lakes have been treated with herbicide. There is no funding for dredging although a need has been identified at multiple sites.

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) update is underway and expected to be completed in 2016.

Sound, Lake, and Stream Water Quality	Baseline 2009	GreNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Hudson Park Beach Closures (2009 baseline)	39	30	10 (both beaches closed 3 days; west beach closed due to high bacterial counts an additional 7 days)

3.17 Habitat and Open Spaces Preservation. The Comprehensive Plan and LWRP updates will include further analysis of, and recommendations for, open space, wetlands, and zoning to protect New Rochelle’s habitat and open spaces.

3.18 Urban Forestry. 250 trees are required to be planted each year for ‘no net loss’ as per GreenNR.

Urban Forestry	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Public Trees planted annually	250	250	50 DPW street trees planted in 2014, 0 in 2015. 50 are planned to be planted in 2016. Parks plants on average 10 new trees per year under its gift catalogue.
Public trees removed annually	-	-	8 removed by Con Edison, 101 removed by the City
Annual net increase/loss	0	0	2015 net loss 99 trees

3.19 Flood Control and Mitigation. Flood mitigation work is underway in the West End. Rain gardens and gray water systems have been researched in conjunction with increased emphasis on landscaping, increasing permeable surfaces, and use of flood control practices during the planning board application review process. Metrics are not tracked.

3.20 Rain Gardens. The Ward School rain garden has been completed. The next will be at Lincoln Park per the Park Master Plan, completion date tentatively set for 2017.

3.21 Green Lawns and Garden Care. The 2014 leaf policy change included a series of leaf mulching demonstrations to encourage residents to keep leaf litter on their properties. Educational outreach continued in 2015 with four leaf mulching demonstration scheduled. Three were completed, and one cancelled due to bad weather.

3.22 Idling Prevention. A joint initiative by the City and the School District has resulted in the implementation of an anti-idling law near schools. No further action is planned.

Idling Prevention	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress
Municipal idling work rules established	0	1	Policy established 2011 or 2012

3.23 GreenNR Walking Guides. Preparing walking guides is a resource heavy initiative. The 2015 emphasis was to be on promotion through Walk to Work and Bike to Work days. These were not undertaken due to lack of resources.

3.24 Local Agriculture and Fresh Food. Ward Acres Community Garden continues to be well subscribed; Lincoln Park Community Garden has expanded to double its plots and 700 linear feet of irrigation has been added. The City now has two successful Farmers' Markets providing fresh food at Ruby Dee Park @ Library Green and Huguenot Park.

Local Agriculture and Fresh Food	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress
Community Garden Plots	88	130	140
Community Garden Sites	1	1	2

Part 4. Smart Growth and Economic Prosperity

Attract beneficial investment to expand our local tax base, enhance the viability of our commercial centers, and promote green job creation and training. Employ smart-growth principles that strategically encourage density and diverse housing opportunities in areas with ready access to local goods, services, infrastructure, and mass transit, while also realizing the economic and recreational potential of assets such as Long Island Sound.

4.25 Transit Oriented Development. The City is actively pursuing TOD development as part of the broader downtown development project and has completed a TOD study. AKRF in conjunction with Nelson Nygaard has recently completed a study of three areas: a

conversion from one way to two way streets in the downtown; changes to traffic patterns around the train station in anticipation of the replacement of the I-95 North Avenue bridge currently scheduled for spring/summer 2018; and changes in traffic circulation around Cedar and River to improve safety and facilitate development in this area.

To date there has been very little increase in new units within half a mile of the train station however TOD development is expected in 2016 through the RDRXR Master Development currently underway and completion of projects currently under construction on Burling Lane and North Avenue.

4.26 Waterfront Access and Enjoyment. This initiative is a large part of the LWRP update due to start in 2015 including a plan for Davids Island. A FEMA approved sun deck repair has been completed at Hudson Park. Phase Two of the FEMA funding will include repairs and upgrades to runoff, bulkheads, and parking areas. Final FEMA approved post Sandy restoration projects should be completed in 2016.

The City is in its 8th year of environmental funding for the Marina through the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Grant Award for Federal Clean Vessel Act. The Parks Department has received a Westchester Community Foundation Grant to study park fees and access. This study will be completed in 2016.

Waterfront Access and Enjoyment	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Estimated feet of public access to Sound Shore	21175	21175	No change
City owned waterfront parks rehabilitated	0	2	Hudson Park Phase 1 completed, Phase 2 in planning stages via FEMA (sea wall, parking lot) FEMA approved shoreline stabilization and bulkhead restoration of Harrison Island @ Five Islands Park completed

4.27 Peripheral Node Planning Standards. This will be part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

4.28 Green Business and Job Creation. The City has entered into a contract with Envirolution, an educational organization to provide job training for local job seekers in conjunction with offering services to businesses to help with energy improvements and other green initiatives. Six New Rochelle residents have successfully completed the course to date.

4.29 Workforce Housing. Building of Affordable Housing is required under the Municipal Code 33 –152 and is included as an incentive in the downtown overlay zone. The number of affordable housing units constructed is not currently tracked.

4.30 Creative Capital. 2014 saw the introduction of a Mural competition funded by Development and managed by the Municipal Arts Commission to promote public art. Artist studio spaces are well established in the downtown area. The Municipal Code has a Private Arts Betterment requirement for any project in excess of 50,000 square feet of Gross Floor Area to further public art amenities. The City is exploring the creation of an arts and cultural district in the downtown area. The research has been finalized and a district plan is being prepared for consideration by council.

Part 5. Transportation and Mobility

Facilitate and encourage the use of sustainable transportation options, including walking, bicycling, carpooling and mass transit, while also reducing traffic congestion and enhancing the safety and efficiency of transportation routes.

5.31 Pedestrian Safety & Mobility. Pedestrian signals are being upgraded through routine maintenance, damage repair, and as part of new development or infrastructure projects. New pedestrian signals have been installed at the intersections of Burling Lane and Memorial, and Elizabeth Road and North Avenue. 70 ADA compliant curb ramps have been installed around the City this year.

Five wooden bus shelters in poor condition were replaced this year with glass and metal shelters featuring fleur de lis on the roofline. In addition, bus shelters in the downtown have been upgraded.

Police records list 3 fatal pedestrian crashes this year with a total of 51 pedestrians struck by cars in the first 8 months of 2015. 92 pedestrians were struck in 2014 with no fatalities.

5.32 Bicycle Safety and Mobility. The East Coast Greenway shared bicycle route signs were erected in 2013. The 2014 CSS TOD study has recommended improvements in cycle facilities including at the Transit Center where the bike rack is now heavily utilized and has been recently expanded. Further expansion is planned for 2016 within the ITC building.

Development has issued an RFP for a bike share program, a vendor has been chosen and a contract is currently being drafted. In addition, some streets have been assessed for possible bike lanes and road diets to improve safety.

5.33 Downtown Access. The AKRF Nelson Nygaard study to determine the viability of conversion from one way to two way traffic in the Downtown and changes to traffic circulation around the Transit Center has been completed. Downtown access will be further enhanced through the TOD and Downtown Development by RDRXR. Placement of bicycle parking in the downtown is exceeding GreeNR projections with a total of 158 spaces located at the Transit Center, New Roc Garage, City Hall, and Library. An additional 154 spaces are available at various city parks.

Downtown Access	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Bicycle spaces in Transit/Central Business District	24	40	158

5.34 Jitney Service Study. After an unsuccessful grant application last year to purchase an electric shuttle, another grant application has been made to explore the use of technology in the creation of an effective shuttle service.

5.35 Green Commuting. The City has partnered with Metropool to promote carpooling under 511 rideshare and other modes of transportation to reduce single occupancy car travel to and from work for municipal employees. Metropool is running a three month Commuter Challenge (October – December) offering a \$25 gift card to employees who complete at least four round trips in a calendar month using an alternative to single occupancy vehicle. Three gift cards were issued for October participation. November participation numbers have not yet been made available.

The number of City employee parking permits has risen sharply due to a switch to license plate recognition enforcement. This change has resulted in compulsory registration of all police and fire personnel vehicles and is an example of a change in process nullifying a metric.

Green Commuting	Baseline 2011	GreenNR Projected Progress 2014	Actual Progress 2015
Number of City Hall Employee Parking Permits Issued	330	315	462

5.36 Scooter and Motorcycle Parking. There are currently three parking facilities with scooter and motorcycle parking – the Transit Center, Prospect Street and New Roc. Motorcycle and scooter riders can apply for a permit to park on crosshatched ‘dead’ spaces on the corners of these designated lots. At ITC the number utilizing this parking is between 20 – 30. Analysis of incentives for encouraging the use of scooters, motorcycles and other alternative transportation options to reduce single occupancy car use is planned for 2016.

Part 6 Public Participation and Awareness

Empower all residents to obtain information about local challenges and issues, make sensible choices about individual lifestyles and practices, and participate fully in community activities and decision making.

6.37 GreenNR Awareness Campaign. The GreenNR review undertaken this year identified this campaign as duplicative and unnecessary beyond providing external links on the City’s website.

6.38 Informed Social Competition. Providing residents with comparative usage of electricity may be undertaken via the approved Community Choice Aggregation initiative if this proves feasible. Nothing further is planned on this initiative.

6.39 Civic Communication. The upgrade of the City website is nearing completion and is expected to improve awareness of general civic information, municipal decision making, and community events. Public outreach and education is undertaken for various City initiatives and policy changes such as the new leaf collection policy. The City's Facebook pages and Twitter feed have been re-activated with daily posts. Train station message boards went online in June with City information. A monthly City e-newsletter launched in November.

6.40 Sustainability Education Center Study. A community initiative is researching the feasibility of restoring the Greenhouse at Hudson Park. It is expected that if this project moves forward through completion one of the uses will be educational. Additionally, the Wildcliff property and building adjacent to Hudson Park should be included in any future adaptive re-use planning.

6.41 Outdoor Classrooms. Ward Acres Park and Grow Lincoln Park have run education programs this year under the Community Gardens initiatives coordinated by Parks and Recreation.

6.42 GreeNR Tote Bags. The County is continuing to work towards a point of sale ban on single use plastic bags. If county legislation is passed there will be no requirement for separate action on the part of the City. The City has passed a resolution in support of the County ban. GreeNR totes could support this ban if sponsorship and/or funding can be found.

6.43 English Language Proficiency. This is best undertaken as a community led initiative.

In Summary

Progress has been made in several areas over 2015, mainly where there is strong alignment with broader departmental priorities / programs. The LED lighting initiative is an excellent example of cost savings through improved technology that also helps the City meet its sustainability goals.

Further progress on measuring progress is dependent on securing funding to hire consultants to annually gather metrics, find and utilize external resources such as ICLEI to calculate greenhouse gas emissions and other metrics, and provide a repository for gathered data.

As noted in the overview of this report, it is expected that the Comprehensive Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program updates will further embed GreeNR goals into standard City policies and procedures over the next year or two. The planned downtown development is expected to greatly enhance the downtown and improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility, safety, and the general experience of spending time in downtown New Rochelle.