

Achieving Sustainability Goals with EPEAT and ICLEI ClearPath in Durango, CO: Case Study

Summary

- EPEAT and ICLEI ClearPath are utilized by the City of Durango to achieve sustainability goals set forth in a Municipal Sustainability Action Plan
- EPEAT-Registered IT product purchases have resulted in quantifiable environmental benefits, significant cost-savings and public recognition
- ICLEI ClearPath enables Durango to develop greenhouse gas inventories, forecast scenarios, visualize climate action plans, and track progress

Introduction

Durango is a small city of 18,500 residents in southwestern Colorado.¹ The local government is candid about their commitment to sustainability and is “dedicated to promoting a sustainable economic viability while we responsibly steward [the] community’s resources.”² Approximately 96% of U.S. cities, towns and villages have 25,000 residents or fewer. This case study demonstrates the positive impact a single locality can make by identifying and pursuing sustainability goals.³

To track and measure progress toward these goals, Durango uses EPEAT, the leading global ecolabel for the IT sector, and ICLEI ClearPath, the leading online software platform for completing greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, forecasts, climate action plans and emissions monitoring.

Durango (“the City”) is committed to improving the quality of life of its residents by systematically, creatively, and thoughtfully utilizing environmental, human and economic resources in a manner that maintains the unique character of the community for the benefit of present and future generations. Durango’s Municipal Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) was designed to support this commitment.

The SAP was formally adopted in 2015, and it defines Durango’s sustainability objectives including monitoring and reducing GHG emissions generated by municipal operations. Because energy use impacts GHG emissions generation, targets for energy consumption were established, including:

- Increased renewable energy generation
- Decreased municipal fleet emissions
- 25% overall reduction in energy use from 2005 levels by 2025

The SAP also requires the City to consider total cost of ownership in product purchases. In addition, minimum sustainability criteria for certain products were established by the City’s Purchasing Division. Examples of criteria include mandating EPEAT for IT products and requiring a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content for all paper products.

Tracking and Measuring Progress Using EPEAT and ICLEI ClearPath

EPEAT

The procurement of sustainable goods and services plays a significant role in meeting goals set forth in the SAP, including emissions targets. Durango has been purchasing EPEAT-registered IT products since 2012 and currently purchases EPEAT-Registered IT products exclusively. There are more than 4,000 EPEAT-Registered products, including laptops, mobile phones, tablets, monitors, printers, copiers, televisions and more from both small manufacturers and leading global brands. This wide selection of sustainable IT products enables Durango to make EPEAT a requirement in bids and contracts. Using EPEAT, the City can quickly identify and purchase IT products with confidence that the purchased devices will save money, last longer, and meet a third-party verified, highly-regarded set of sustainability criteria.

EPEAT-Registered products reduce both Durango's GHG emissions and cost by meeting the energy efficiency requirements alone. Plus, longer-lasting products extend the refresh cycle which reduces production impacts, like the amount of hazardous waste generated and primary materials consumed, in addition to saving money. The City is committed to considering the life-cycle cost of all products and services and EPEAT provides a convenient way to quantify the benefits of those decisions for both the government and the community.

Through Durango's use of EPEAT the City has earned distinction as an EPEAT Purchaser Award Winner, achieving the second-highest tier of award. These awards recognize excellence in sustainable procurement of IT products. Higher honors are earned by those that have written policies in place requiring the purchase of EPEAT registered IT products in multiple product categories. The EPEAT Purchaser Awards program also serves as a resource that has equipped Durango with best practices for environmental impact tracking. For example, information available through the awards program enabled the City to review of current procurement procedures and identify priority areas for improvement. Winners of the 2017 EPEAT Purchaser Awards saved an aggregate \$33.8 million over the lifetime of their EPEAT-Registered products, and the City of Durango alone saves tens of thousands of dollars through annual purchases of EPEAT-Registered products.



EPEAT criteria cover the entire lifecycle of a product, resulting in devices that are more energy efficient, less toxic, longer lasting and easier to recycle.

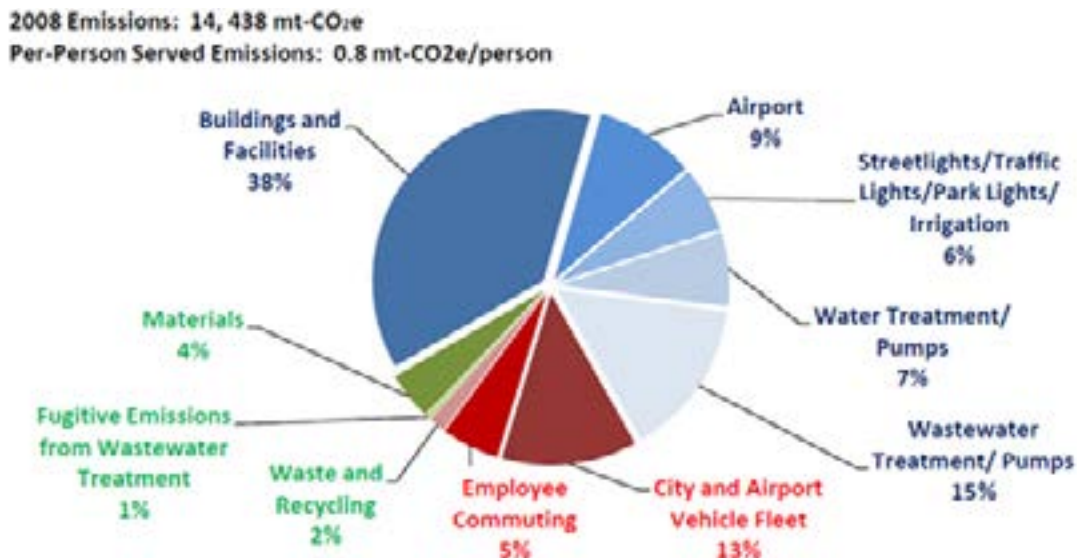
Lifetime Environmental Benefits of EPEAT-Registered Devices Purchased by Durango in 2016*

Metric	Amount
Electricity Saved	179,000 kWh
GHG Reductions	31.6 metric tons
Hazardous Waste Avoided	434 kg
Solid Waste Reduced	1.6 metric tons
Water Pollutant Emissions Prevented	254 kg
Cost Savings from Energy Use Reductions	\$18,600

*Benefits are calculated using the US EPA's Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator - EEBC Computers Version 4 - and estimate cost savings over the product's lifetime

ICLEI ClearPath

In 2008, the City of Durango used a standardized US Community Protocol for Accounting and Reporting GHG Emissions, which followed recommendations from the EPA Climate Leaders Program, to conduct and report on its first GHG emissions inventory for municipal operations. Emissions associated with the critical urban materials purchases, employee commutes, the Durango-La Plata airport, waste and recycling were calculated. Total municipal government emissions were found to be 14,438 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. ICLEI software enables users to identify which



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Since 2014, the City of Durango has recommenced the use of ICLEI ClearPath to track GHG emissions data and is now using the software to complete an annual municipal GHG emissions inventory. Using ICLEI ClearPath to track GHG emissions will enable the City to be consistent and transparent in their reporting. Durango is collecting data with the intention of completing a 2016 emissions inventory by the end of 2017. The City will use trends across these data sets to define priority action areas and take informed next steps to meet sustainability targets.

As Durango builds on past emissions inventories, the data supporting the City's reporting processes will become more robust. This will in turn enhance how measured progress and continuing efforts are shared with the community.

Leveraging EPEAT and ICLEI to Meet Future Sustainability Goals

Durango will continue to use the information generated through the use of ICLEI ClearPath and EPEAT to continually improve the City's sustainability initiatives. Using ICLEI ClearPath to track GHG emissions allows the City to set an emissions baseline and evaluate the effectiveness of existing emissions reduction programs. In addition, being able to track emissions by sector enables the City to set priorities for emissions reduction programs going forward. Having a framework to compare past and present GHG emissions inventories facilitates the identification of trends and anomalies.

The SAP includes an Environmental Purchasing Policy (EPP). The EPP prioritizes the purchase of energy- and water-efficient products (including office equipment). Specifying in contract bids that IT products be EPEAT-Registered not only ensures that the City continues to meet SAP and EPP objectives; it also means the City is able to track and report on the impact of these policies. Purchasing requirements like this demonstrate demand from institutional purchasers for sustainable products, and it is key to changing the way IT products are designed and manufactured.

Finally, Durango recognizes that these tools can be leveraged for use in sustainability reporting, such as the carbonn Climate Registry, to further increase transparency and accountability.

Additional Strategies for Reaching Sustainability Goals

A common challenge in meeting sustainability targets for governments of all sizes is coordination between the many departments that are involved in sustainable purchasing and emissions tracking efforts. Durango established a dedicated Sustainability Division responsible for overseeing the tracking and reporting of sustainability objectives and initiatives.

Despite having a dedicated sustainability team, collaboration with other City departments remains essential. Cross-departmental collaboration ensures that reliable data is collected and that sustainable purchasing policies are being implemented consistently city-wide.

For example, the City of Durango Information Services (IS) Department tracks all electronic equipment owned or leased by the City. The IS Department works with the Purchasing Division to establish minimum product requirements and evaluate bids for products and services. Both groups must coordinate with the Sustainability Division to ensure all procured products support the SAP. Having common platforms like ICLEI ClearPath and EPEAT accessible across departments streamlines the City's purchasing procedures and keeps emissions-tracking consistent.

In addition to targeted efforts to organize operations across departments, the EPP allows the City to establish a price preference for environmentally preferable products. Departments can specify EPEAT in RFP documents and allocate bids to vendors up to five percent over the lowest bid if the products or services specified achieve a higher level of environmental performance.

Despite what this allowance may imply, the purchase of EPEAT-Registered products has actually decreased Durango's total cost of ownership for IT products. The City will save an average of \$55.55 for each EPEAT-Registered device purchased in 2016 as a result of energy savings and product longevity.

Remaining Challenges

There are a few examples of products for which the City has been unable to identify acceptable sustainable choices. These include instances in which sustainable products that meet Durango's standards for certain police, water treatment, and IS equipment have not been identified. In other cases, the infrastructure requirements associated with a particular product would be prohibitively expensive, such as with broad adoption of compressed natural gas (CNG) fleet vehicles.

Lessons Learned

Durango has found that it is essential to leverage the existing external resources in order to develop and implement a successful sustainability plan. In many cities, sustainability programs rely on a staff member who has an already-full workload, or sustainability projects are tucked into the work plans of several employees in a piecemeal fashion. While Durango is fortunate to have a dedicated Sustainability Division responsible for overseeing internal and external sustainability initiatives, tracking sustainable purchasing practices and emissions can still be a daunting task.

Fortunately, there is a plethora of guidance and tools available for free online and through membership to organizations such as ICLEI. Using established, reputable frameworks and programs such as ICLEI ClearPath and EPEAT can help de-mystify sustainable purchasing and emissions tracking by providing resources like step-by-step reporting guidance, model policy and contract language, awards programs and case studies. Reading the purchasing policies and emissions reports of similar or exemplary cities can also help provide a starting point from which to develop community-specific procedures.

Durango Team

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About ICLEI and Green Electronics Council

ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) is the leading global network of local governments dedicated to sustainability, resilience, and climate action, with more than 1,500 cities, towns, and counties around the globe. ICLEI provides cutting-edge resources and technical guidance to help local governments reach their goals, and connects leaders to share solutions and accelerate progress. Learn more at www.icleiusa.org.

The Green Electronics Council (GEC) is a mission-driven global non-profit that collaborates to achieve a world in which only sustainable IT products are designed, manufactured, and purchased. GEC's flagship program is [EPEAT](#), the leading global ecolabel for ICT products that provides manufacturers sustainable product design criteria and, through the online EPEAT Registry, provides institutional purchasers access to a wide selection of high-performance, sustainable, and cost-competitive IT products. Learn more at www.GreenElectronicsCouncil.org

The Green Electronics Council and ICLEI work together and with local jurisdictions to identify sustainability opportunities, particularly those pertaining to sustainable procurement and greenhouse gas emissions tracking and reduction.

If you are interested in a case study for your city, state or organization, please contact...

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[1] <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/durangocitycolorado/PST045216>

[2] <http://www.durangogov.org/index.aspx?NID=169>

[3] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/241695/number-of-us-cities-towns-villages-by-population-size/>