

## Chapter 8 – Marketing and Education

Developing an effective strategy for sharing information requires finding that perfect balance between whispering in a well and hollering, as well as matching useful knowledge with the appropriate audience. This chapter will aid in this process by offering three different approaches. The marketing and public relations strategies provide a market based approach, which segments the population by sector, seeking to reach developers and business owners, regional educators and various media outlets. The third section offers a more grass-roots approach designed to inspire community partnerships between local government and non-profit organizations.

### 8.1 – Marketing

Effective green planning in Highland Park depends on the actions of several different players. While residents can each do their part to make the Borough a greener, healthier place to live, other vital entities must become involved to ensure achievement of a green goal. The Highland Park municipal government ought to work with those people who control the development and business in the Borough.

Thus, the success of the marketing strategy lies in encouraging two major parties, developers and business owners, to participate in the greening of Highland Park. These two parties comprise the non-residential portion of the Highland Park Green Plan. Each can participate in the program by setting a green example for both their peers and their clients. Going the extra distance to build or renovate with green goals in mind, these key players can make a large contribution to the creating a green community. The municipal government of Highland Park should serve as the contact and information source for this key target niche.

In addition, one minor party, regional educators, should be encouraged to spread the overall greening movement throughout New Jersey. Upon establishing Highland Park as a model municipality for smaller community green planning, the Borough's assets can be used to educate students at all levels in science, geography and health topics. The Highland Park Environmental Center can serve as the primary avenue through which Highland Park can share its green planning innovations.

The following sections outline the two components of the marketing strategy.

#### ***Target One***

- Developers and Business Owners

#### ***Goals***

- To encourage green building and green businesses in Highland Park
- To establish Highland Park as a model for smaller community green planning
- To increase the number of LEED certified buildings in Highland Park

## **Strategy**

- Municipal Government should:
  - Provide developers and business owners with incentives that encourage LEED certification, sustainable economic development and environmentally-friendly business practices
  - Negotiate with developers or business on a case-by-case basis in order to determine the most effective contract for each green planning project
  - Develop potential incentives for developers
    - Property tax abatement
    - Utility relocation cost coverage
    - Site acquisition cost coverage
    - Site preparation cost coverage
  - Develop potential incentives for business owners
    - Property tax abatement
    - Provision of low-cost or bulk purchased green products
    - Free consultants to address green renovation costs
    - Partial renovation cost coverage

## **Target Two**

- Regional Educators

## **Goals**

- To promote green planning initiatives/practices throughout the New Jersey region
- To utilize the assets of the Highland Park Environmental Center on a regular basis
- To demonstrate the importance of environmental protection to children of all ages

## **Strategy**

- Municipal government and the Highland Park Environmental Center staff should:
  - Offer opportunities to regional educators at all levels to bring field trips to the Highland Park Environmental Center
    - Elementary Schools
      - Focus on basic green practices such as solar power, tree planting and energy conservation
    - Middle Schools
      - Focus on the science of basic green practices such as how solar power works and the importance of trees to the air quality
    - High Schools
      - Focus on more advanced green topics such as the effects of emissions on the ozone, energy conservation methods and implications of impervious surface runoff
    - University
      - Focus on integration of sustainable and green communities across several fields of study including: biology, chemistry, geology, geography, sociology and urban planning

## 8.2 – Public Relations

The public relations plan focuses strictly on media outlets through which Highland Park can begin to establish itself as a national model for smaller community green planning. The model community approach can serve to promote similar green planning initiatives in other communities throughout the United States. By approaching national, regional and local media outlets with detailed press releases, Highland Park can publicize its mission via newspaper, magazine, television, online news sites and other niche market internet channels.

### **Target**

- National, regional and local media outlets

### **Goals**

- To promote Highland Park as a premier model for smaller community green planning
- To publicize various green planning initiatives throughout the United States
- To educate residents of other small communities on the benefits of green planning

### **Strategy**

- Municipal Government should:
  - Seek external funding for high profile demonstration projects that showcase green technologies
  - Issues press releases regularly
  - Participate in requested interviews with media sources
  - Monitor green planning progress in order to issue the relevant press releases
  - Tailor each press release to its target
    - National, regional, local or specialty
- National media outlets include:
  - Newspaper: USA Today, New York Times
  - Television: CBS, NBC, ABC and FOX news magazines
  - Magazines: Time, Newsweek
  - Web Sites: the online versions of all previously mentioned sources
- Regional media outlets include:
  - Newspaper: Star Ledger, New York Times, Asbury Park Press
  - Television: New Jersey News (NJN), local cable access channels
  - Magazines: New Jersey Monthly
  - Web Sites: the online versions of all previously mentioned sources
- Local media outlets include:
  - Newspaper: Highland Park Quarterly, Main Street Highland Park Newsletter, The Highland Park Herald, Rutgers University Daily Targum, New Brunswick Home News Tribune, Metuchen-Edison Sentinel
  - Television: Highland Park Television Station, New York City local television networks, Philadelphia local television networks
  - Radio: Rutgers Radio
  - Web Sites: the online versions of all previously mentioned sources

- Specialty media outlets include:
  - Television: Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, Home & Garden Channel
  - Magazines: Planning, Architectural Digest
  - Web Sites: Planetizen ([www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com)), Building Green ([www.buildinggreen.com](http://www.buildinggreen.com)), Worldwatch Institute ([www.worldwatch.org](http://www.worldwatch.org)), National Strategies for Sustainable Development ([www.nssd.net](http://www.nssd.net))

### 8.3 – Public Education and Outreach

Understandably, the pace of life in New Jersey does not always afford residents the time to investigate the environmental efforts undertaken by neighboring municipalities, let alone green programs in other towns and states. However, failing to stay abreast of these trends may cause Highland Park to overlook valuable cost-saving techniques that will contribute to the borough’s health and well-being, as well as its long-term financial sustainability. With municipal support the following educational tools can help Highland Park’s residents, businesses and educators incorporate green solutions into their everyday lives.

#### **Target**

- Highland Park residents, property owners, businesses, and schools

#### **Goal**

- To provide all residents with sufficient information on energy, health, waste and other environmental concerns to ultimately encourage the creation of a greener community

#### **Strategies**

##### **Green Store.**

- **Green Products** – Since a dizzying array of “eco-friendly” products are available on the market, it can be difficult to decide which options are most appropriate. Typically, when thinking about “green” products, only items produced from recycled materials come to mind. However, many traditional products that offer significant advantages in terms of energy efficiency exist. Unfortunately, many people do not have a great deal of free time to research all these green options.

The city of Santa Monica took an interesting approach to addressing impediments to green building by partnering with a private organization to create a resource center, which provides the public information about alternative materials. The Green Building Resource Center offers everything from product samples and free design ideas to workshops on topics such as solar retrofitting.

Creating a similar center here in Highland Park would certainly help to further municipal efforts towards increasing sustainability by providing valuable information on green building to our town’s residents. The provision of such a unique asset in

New Jersey would likely attract visitors from near-by municipalities interested in green design, further reinforcing Highland Park's status as a green community.

- **Materials Exchange** – Many community resource centers around the country provide dual services – diverting reusable materials from landfills and educating the public about sustainable waste management. The Hudson Valley Materials Exchange (HVME), a non-profit organization, began in 1993 as a municipal program in the Town of New Paltz, New York. According to the organization's mission statement, "HVME is an educational waste prevention organization that fosters business and community development, art and culture, environmental protection, and sustainable living through its services."

HVME fulfills its mission in part through the maintenance of a "Community Warehouse." The warehouse is primarily stocked with the donations of materials from businesses throughout the Hudson Valley, resulting from by-products of manufacturing operations, overstock or closures. These materials are displayed in the warehouse and typically sold to artists and teachers who find creative uses for the items. Another aspect of the organization involves the Used/Surplus Building Materials program, which collects and re-sells items for construction or remodeling such as ceramic floor tiles and lumber. HVME also offers educational opportunities, such as the "Reusable Art" Workshop Series.

Highland Park could consider looking to its mature community members, interested in providing a service to the town, to staff a resource exchange center entirely on a volunteer basis. Not only would this strategy greatly reduce operating costs, it would provide a meaningful way for people in different age groups to socialize and interact with each other, who might not typically have the opportunity to do so. Finally, the creation of a municipal materials exchange would help Highland Park send a message that waste diversion and reduction is an important aspect of a sustainable community.

- **The Green Faces Program** – Offering public recognition to individual residents, who help make the town a better place through environmentally sensitive lifestyle choices, accomplishes a two-fold goal. It enables the municipality to say thank you, while inspiring others to make an extra effort as well.

One inexpensive and relatively easy method for realizing this objective can be establishing a Green Faces program. The program would involve requesting submissions of photographs by residents involved in a "green" activity. Possible photo subjects might be a father building a compost bin with his daughter or a community member walking home from the supermarket. Photo submissions should include a brief description of the action and how it helps the environment, as well as at least one resource for more information.

An added incentive for participation might be a raffle prize for entries, in which a randomly selected photo wins a "green" prize, such as a home composting bin, or reusable thermos. If an entry fee was included with photo submissions, it might be

feasible to award a more substantial prize, such as a mulching lawn mower. The ultimate goal might be to have a Green Faces photo for every household in Highland Park.

Finally, the photo montage should be displayed in a highly visible location, such as a storefront window on Main Street in Highland Park. The opportunity to feature Green Faces might be awarded to local business owners interested in participating. Businesses would submit photos of “green” activities in their store or office, such as recycling paper or using environmentally friendly cleaning supplies. Eventually, given a certain volume of responses, it might be possible to select several businesses as hosts. However, it is important that each display follow a uniform design and include a header/banner clearly describing the title and purpose of the program.

**Workshops and Discussions.** Highland Park should provide events for property owners to discuss problems and solutions. They can be held quarterly, each covering a particular issue – solar panels, composting, water-efficient plumbing or landscaping. Guest lecturers, from within or outside Highland Park, can provide insightful information on these topics. Faculty/staff at nearby Rutgers University, NJ DEP staff, green building suppliers, and experienced community members, those already using green technologies and practices, can facilitate an evening’s workshop or discussion. Meetings can be held at the Senior Center, where many public meetings are currently located.

**Mural.** A unique opportunity exists to beautify an environmental “hot spot” in Highland Park. The cement wall along Route 27 at the southern entrance to the town could offer a vibrant welcome, and pose an alternative vision for the town, with a few coats of paint and some creativity.

One source of inspiration for a mural project with an environmental focus can be found in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Meadville is a town with an unfortunate legacy of environmental degradation associated with its history of industrial practices. After years of hard work to reclaim a defunct factory site, the Crawford County Industrial Park now houses 20 different businesses including the CEED (Center for Economic and Environmental Development). Members and student interns at the CEED created a large mural depicting the history of the town, including the pollution that occurred with industrial activity but also the successful community process of remediation that followed.

Highland Park does not face the same scale of environmental problems as Meadville. However, a mural depicting a more challenging view of how the town has changed, what elements of the natural environment have been threatened as a result of this change and what we might do as a community to address these issues would present a more provocative, visually stimulating approach to public art. Although not always easy to address difficult themes, such as pollution, a more sophisticated and honest representation of the complexity and importance of issue of sustainability would be appropriate given the education level of Highland Park’s residents.

**Informative Signs.** Signs should be displayed throughout Highland Park highlighting unique environmental features and problems. For example, a sign placed in a parking lot can

describe the impacts the parking lot has on storm water and heat island effects. If a parking lot is replaced with a pervious surface, describe the new surface and why it is important. These signs would educate the public on impacts humans have on environmental systems. It can influence property owners to rethink their practices and build a broader support for Highland Park's green initiatives.

**Informational Website.** On-line information allows Highland Park residents to access data anytime and anywhere. A website, linked to the Borough's homepage, can provide links to relevant on-line resources regarding green plan elements.

A useful site would include the following information:

- Historical overview and description of green plan
- Summaries of Highland Park green plan documents with links to pdfs.
- Text on the green plan itself- including specific problems, why they are significant, and what steps Highland Park will take to mitigate them.
- A Toolbox for residents/ business owners:
  - Links to existing on-line resources
  - Links to specific land ordinances/ tax incentives relating to green initiatives
  - Links to Municipal, County, State, and Federal green programs
  - "How To" guides, or even links to similar websites, on green building techniques, financial incentive programs, waste disposal techniques, etc
- Information on other Highland Park outreach and marketing strategies

**Spring Street Fair.** Highland Park offers multiple community festivities. The spring street fair offers the best opportunity to incorporate a green element because it can be combined with Earth Day festivities. The fair should include information on Highland Park's green initiatives. Providing hands-on displays makes the information more memorable and fun. Displays can include green technologies, composting techniques, and examples of native species. Vendors can display green technologies to the public, allowing visitors to learn about solar and wind technologies, alternative carpets, etc. and even consider purchasing such items.

Belmar NJ conducted a similar expo on their boardwalk last summer. Visitors to the shore were able to stroll along the boardwalk and learn about alternative energies, technologies, and building techniques. Vendors displayed their goods and shore visitors were able to see a fan powered by solar cells.

**Announcements.** In order for Highland Park to become green, all individuals living and working in Highland Park ought to be aware of the issues. Highland Park can provide announcements regarding green initiatives on public bulletin boards and other postings around town; the newsletters, as mentioned above, the Highland Park TV site, local radio stations, and its website. All classes of media should be accessed in order to reach out to the entire community.

**Education in the Schools.** Highland Park's school district should incorporate environmental issues into their curriculum. Teaching the Borough's younger population

would ensure that today's environmental initiatives will continue to be carried out in the future. Three class modules have already been developed specifically for Highland Park schools and should be used in the classrooms. The schools are also encouraged to examine the countless environmental educational efforts directed to the K-12 grades.

**Ecological Footprint.** Simply put, an eco-footprint is the result of calculating an entity's consumption of natural resources and graphically representing that data as an expression of square miles. A footprint can be measured by a household, classroom, business, school, municipality, or even a country in order to determine how we might use natural resources more efficiently.

The process of collecting the data necessary for this investigation is relatively simple on the household level. Lifestyle patterns are measured, such as electric and water readings, number of trips taken using public transportation, how many meals include some form of meat, etc.

There are also many free curricula, available on the web, designed for calculating eco-footprints for classrooms and schools. Because of the nature of data collection, students will have to incorporate math and reading skills that fulfill traditional curricular requirements, while becoming more aware of the role they play in depleting the world's natural resources. Ideally, the process of formulating an eco-footprint will be followed with the development and implementation of a plan to reduce the class or school's footprint.

The process of developing an eco-footprint at the municipal level is significantly more complicated, in fact, when the City of Santa Monica developed their eco-footprint they hired a private firm to aid in the calculations and analysis. However, the city has used the images and the result of the calculations extensively, not only for public relations and educational purposes, but as a tool for establishing meaningful goals for reducing their city's consumption levels.

## 8.4 – Useful Links

### *Green Store*

- Green Building Resource Center
  - <http://globalgreen.org/gbrc/index.htm>
- Hudson Valley Materials Exchange
  - <http://www.hvmaterialsexchange.com/about.html>
- Center for Economic and Environmental Development
  - <http://ceed.alleg.edu/CEED/fall20001.htm>

### *Successful Green Planning Informational Site*

- Seattle, WA
  - <http://www.seattle.gov/environment/>
- Santa Monica, CA
  - <http://santa-monica.org/epd/>

- Santa Monica Resource Center
  - <http://www.globalgreen.org/gbrc/>
- Boulder, CO
  - <http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/environmentalaffairs/>

### ***Environmental Educational Resources***

- NJ DEP Educational Services
  - <http://www.nj.gov/dep/seeds/>
- North American Association for Environmental Education
  - <http://www.envirolink.org/categories.html?catid=1>
- EnviroLink Educational Resources
  - <http://www.envirolink.org/categories.html?catid=1>
- ProjectWet
  - <http://www.projectwet.org/>
- ProjectWILD
  - <http://www.projectwild.org/>

### ***Ecological Footprint Resources***

- Vermont Earth Institute
  - <http://www.vtearthinstitute.org/ecofootprint.html>
- Lead International
  - <http://www.lead.org/leadnet/footprint/default.htm>
- Vermont Commons School
  - <http://www.vtcommonsschool.org/curriculum/research.html>
- The Concord Constortium
  - <http://www.concord.org/~barbara/guide/footprint/index.html>
- Global Footprints
  - <http://www.globalfootprints.org/teachers/overview.htm>
- Redefining Progress
  - <http://www.redefiningprogress.org/footprint/>
- City of Santa Monica
  - [http://santa-monica.org/epd/news/FP\\_Q&A.htm](http://santa-monica.org/epd/news/FP_Q&A.htm)