Sustainable Reserve Program Initiatives and Funding History

Below is a brief description of past programs, services and initiatives funded by the Sustainable Reserve Program..

Wind Monitoring Project - $12,727

In 2005, a joint effort between Oberlin College and OMLPS was undertaken to determine the economic viability of installing wind turbines in and around Oberlin. This project included the procurement of a 50 meter wind monitoring tower and associated equipment for a total cost of $12,727. The wind monitoring tower was erected in New Russia Township Park in the summer of 2006 and wind data was collected for one year. Results of the wind data showed that Oberlin did not have enough sustained wind speeds for an economically viable project. The wind monitoring tower and associated equipment was sold as surplus in 2015.

Full Circle Fuels Bio-Diesel Fuel Station - $10,000

In 2006, an Oberlin College Environmental Studies graduate, Mr. Sam Merrett, leased the former gas station at 141 South Main Street for the purpose of establishing and operating a bio-fuels station in the community. The station offered services such as bio-diesel conversions on diesel vehicles, dispensing bio-diesel fuels, diesel vehicle repair, etc. $10,000 from the Sustainable Reserve Program was used to assist with certifying the integrity of the existing underground storage tanks at the facility and to leverage an additional $10,000 from the State of Ohio for fuel dispensing equipment.

POWER Low Income Insulation Initiative - $37,750

In 2008, OMLPS collaborated with POWER (**P**roviding **O**berlin **W**ith **E**fficiency **R**esponsibly) to initiate and fund a one-year pilot program to insulate 10 low-income qualified homes in the Oberlin community. OMLPS staff supported the initiative by performing infrared camera inspections and blower door tests before and after the weatherization/insulation services were completed. In addition, OMLPS staff developed and prepared Request for Proposals for insulation contractors, arranged for tours of homes in need of insulation services and provided contractor oversight services. Initially, insulation services were completed on eight (8) homes in the community. The average cost of weatherizing each home was $1,500. In 2010, POWER received additional funding to continue the initiative and ultimately had insulation work completed in a total of 28 homes.

POWER Energy Advocacy Program - $95,875

In 2012, OMLPS collaborated with POWER to developed and implement an Energy Advocacy and Assessment Program offering a broader, more personal, one-on-one approach to residential energy efficiency engagement and implementation. The program offered a user-friendly, personalized service designed to help local homeowners overcome the common barriers to energy efficiency implementation and included the following services:

- a walk-through home energy assessment offering simple, low-cost efficiency recommendations and basic information about energy efficiency and conservation in the home;
- assistance to residents with understanding and navigating available efficiency programs including the Columbia Gas Home Performance Solutions and Warm Choice programs, the City's Efficiency Smart Program a
- leveraging the Oberlin College Green Edge Fund for income qualified residents for needed weatherization repairs on all electric homes;
- assistance to homeowners in locating and coordinating with reliable contractors;
- identification of homes requiring insulation services that qualify for income-based gap-grants, and;
- support of utility-sponsored energy efficiency initiatives.

Over the past 3 years, the program has yielded good results. POWER has conducted 274 walk-through home assessments leading to the engagement of Columbia Gas energy audit services valued at $500 per audit for 113 homeowners. 63 homeowners have taken advantage of energy efficiency services by Columbia Gas with 46 homeowners receiving Columbia Gas Home Performance rebates at an average of $1200 per home for a total of $75,600 and 17 homeowners receiving Warm Choice rebates at an average of $3400 per home for a total of $57,800. Columbia Gas estimates that each participating homeowner saves $200 in annual energy costs for a total of $13,800 per year. In addition to promoting the Columbia Gas energy efficiency programs, POWER has effectively promoted OMLPS's Efficiency Smart Program distributing over 1280 CFL bulbs saving consumers $67,650 in lifetime energy costs.

OMLPS Small Business Energy Audit - $3,000

In 2012, OMLPS collaborated with an Oberlin College senior, Ms. Elizabeth Campbell, on an initiative to perform energy audits for six (6) small downtown businesses to identify economical energy efficiency opportunities in the downtown business district. At the time, Ms. Campbell was working with the Oberlin Main Street/Chamber organization through the Bonner Center for Service and Learning. OMLPS and Ms. Campbell work with local business owners to identify and pre-select a group of six (6) downtown businesses willing to participate in an energy audit survey. The audit consisted of a walk-through inspection of each building, photographing the building interior and exterior, collecting energy consumption data, preparing a lighting inventory, obtaining efficiency ratings of major equipment and collecting building envelope information. A third-party energy consultant, Osborn Engineering, provided engineering services at a cost of $3,000 to review and analyze the data and prepare energy efficiency opportunities with a narrative, probable construction costs, energy savings, costs savings and simple payback. Audit report summaries were completed and reviewed with each business owner including recommendations for efficiency improvements providing optimal financial return on investment. In general, the audit findings revealed that lighting upgrades and HVAC improvements proved the most economically-feasible with reasonable payback periods. One small business, Lorenzo's Pizza, did complete a lighting upgrade project in 2012 as a result of the audit recommendations.

Appliance Super Rebate Program - $16,000

In 2012, OMLPS initiated an appliance super rebate program to enhance rebates offered through the City's energy efficiency services provider, Efficiency Smart. The program tripled the Efficiency Smart rebates for refrigerators, dehumidifiers and ceiling fans and doubled the Efficiency Smart rebates for clothes washers, ECM furnace fans and heat pump water heaters. The non-profit group, POWER, assisted OMLPS with promotion of the super rebate program and served as the administrative and fiscal agent to verify rebate requirements and approvals by Efficiency Smart and issue rebate checks to consumers. Through the end of 2015, POWER has issued 195 super rebate checks to consumers totaling $12,270. The program continues to operate and is available to OMLPS retail electric customers.

Green House Gas Inventory - $12,885

The City and Oberlin College participate in the Clinton Climate Initiative's Climate Positive Development Program (CPDP) committing to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions below zero. As a next step in the Climate Positive Development Program process and to effectively carry out commitments of the Council-adopted Climate Action Plan, the City hired Cameron-Cole of Boulder, Colorado to perform a Green-House Gas inventory in 2013. The total cost of the inventory was $25,710 and the Sustainable Reserve Fund paid 50% of the cost. The Oberlin Project provided funding for the remaining 50%. The purpose of the inventory was to set a new baseline for City-wide emissions to use as a yardstick for measuring the City's performance in meeting emission reduction goals in the future. The GHG inventory also provided GHG measurement tools to offer staff a consistent evaluation tool to analyze and develop emission reduction projections for future strategies identified in the Climate Action Plan.

LED Street Light Conversion Project - $75,000

Since 2015, Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System has been converting the City's cobra head street lighting system from high pressure sodium to energy efficient LED. The project will reduce electricity consumption from municipal street lighting by approximately 75%. $75,000 from the Sustainable Reserve Program has been used to procure LED street lights and associated hardware.

City Facility Energy Efficiency - $35,000

In 2016, several City facilities will undergo transition to energy efficiency LED lighting including office and common area lighting at City Hall and Old City Hall, garage and office lighting at the Buildings/Grounds Department, parking lot lighting and flag/sign lighting at the Fire Department and outside building and fuel station canopy lighting at the General Maintenance Division facility. $35,000 from the Sustainable Reserve Program will be used to procure equipment and hire contract labor to install the LED lighting.