

Lamorinda Gets Its Carbon Footprint

By Sophie Braccini

What is the carbon footprint of Lafayette, Moraga or Orinda? How many tons of greenhouse gases do we contribute each year? What can be done to slow the threat of global climate change? The answer to these and other questions form the basis for why our three cities have joined ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI is a non-profit organization that seeks to help communities become aware of their carbon impact.

The first step in defining a town's carbon footprint involves taking an "inventory" of local energy consumption. For that purpose, ICLEI provides software that helps a community define, calculate and evaluate the generation of greenhouse gas emissions that result from their specific energy profile. Further, the program allows the community to ask, "what if" questions in an effort to identify how changes in their energy consumption can reduce greenhouse emissions. Last week, a training session was held for Contra Costa County members of ICLEI. "The workshop was very helpful in learning how to use the ICLEI software for developing the baseline inventory for each of our cities," says Ann Meredith, Lafayette Community Development Director.

The cool news was that ICLEI had received a grant designed to help Contra Costa communities gather the data they need to more effectively use the ICLEI software. At the training session, community representatives were provided data for transportation, buildings, and other functions pertinent to their

will be making a report to the City Council in March on the status of all the tasks, including the baseline." It's up to the city to determine how and when it will release the data to the public.

"The software helps to create a plan," confirms Casey De Golai, a St Mary's intern

process this spring with Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

"My hope is that we utilize the information from these efforts to develop a program to cut our energy cost," says Deschambault, "We need to balance our budget better and we have a lack of revenue. So we can reduce cost and/or raise revenue. This is a good way to reduce cost." De Golai adds, "We need to think about the world more than about money, and anyway there are grants out there to help pay for the right investments." The Association of Bay Area Governments has several grants available to support cost reduction, and PG&E offers many opportunities to support energy saving strategies.

These elements should allow our three cities to foster the Environmental Strategy they are more or less formally establishing. Ann Meredith likes to remind of Lafayette's mission statement in this area: "The City of Lafayette is committed to developing and implementing environmental policies and programs that will enable the City and its residents to meet their present needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

home towns. "The San Francisco Foundation gave a grant to ICLEI for Contra Costa county cities," explains Moraga Mayor Linda Deschambault, "the Foundation paid ICLEI to do the work for us, it's a \$10,000 value inventory that we got as part of joining ICLEI." ICLEI collected information for each town in conjunction with PGE&E, the California Waste Management Board and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

"Developing baseline inventory is one of the City's Environmental Strategy tasks," said Meredith, "and I

who has been working on the subject for Moraga Planning Department, "then you can test the hypothesis and improve." The process that ICLEI is doing with cities includes the development of action plans that address how to set targets and programs for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. ICLEI said they will begin that

