



City of Lowell Becomes National Model for Energy Improvements to Historic Districts

Program Name:

Carbon Neutral Lowell Park and Preservation District Initiative

Location:

Lowell, Massachusetts

Federal Funding:

\$5 million

Target Building Types:

Residential (multi-family and rental properties) and Commercial (large commercial, small business)

Financing Tools:

Loan loss reserve, interest rate buy down, grants, rebates, in-kind service (free energy assessments)

Website:

www.lowellma.gov

PROGRAM SUMMARY



The City of Lowell is using funding from the BetterBuildings program to implement the Carbon Neutral Downtown Park and Preservation District, an energy efficiency program targeting the city's historic buildings. The project is partnering with the state's historic preservation office and the National Park Service

to demonstrate how energy efficiency upgrades can be achieved in historic buildings while also adhering to historic standards.

Incorporated in 1822 as the first planned industrial city in the United States, the City of Lowell has transformed former manufacturing buildings into a downtown area that remains true to its history and its architectural character. Lowell's downtown now contains several million square feet worth of commercial space, much of it contained within historic structures.

An early program element allowed building owners in the Downtown Historic District to apply for rebates up to \$1,500 on equipment installed by the local utility. A newly announced funding initiative enables businesses and building owners to seek up to \$500,000 in low-interest loans or combined grant and loan incentives for energy efficiency improvements. Building owners will provide one dollar in funding for every two dollars provided by the BetterBuildings program.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The City of Lowell is unique in its objective to provide neighborhood-scale energy improvements to a national historic district. If successful, this project will serve as a model for other communities, showing that historic preservation and energy efficient building construction are compatible. The City of Lowell has received over 60 inquiries from building owners seeking information about how to benefit from this program.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

City of Lowell, Lowell Development and Financial Corporation, National Park Service, Lowell Historic Board, National Grid, and University of Massachusetts at Lowell.

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BetterBuildings Program

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“This project will put numerous people back to work, reduce the utility costs associated with our downtown real estate, help protect the environment, and reinforce Lowell’s emerging image as a progressive community on the rise.”

—City Manager Bernie Lynch