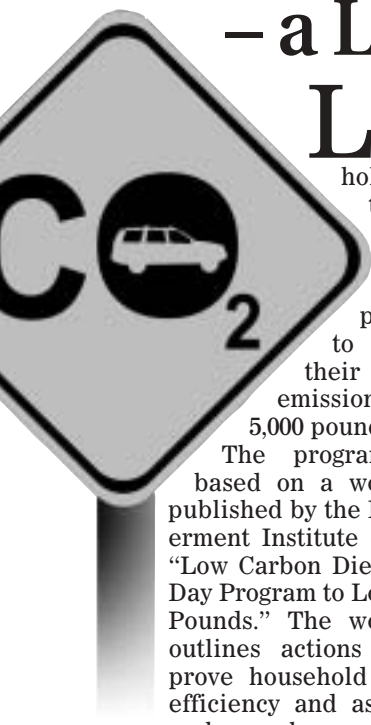


City Residents Go on a Diet — a Low Carbon Diet



Last fall, 100 households participated in a 30 day pilot program

to reduce their carbon emissions by 5,000 pounds each.

The program was based on a workbook published by the Empowerment Institute entitled "Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds." The workbook outlines actions to improve household energy efficiency and assigns a carbon value savings to

each action taken. Participants calculated their baseline carbon footprints using a California-specific carbon calculator at www.coolcalifornia.org and developed and implemented individual plans of action to reach their household carbon reduction goals.

Households reported their results at

the end of the 30 day program. From the 47 reports received, households pledged to save a collective 253,723 annual pounds of CO₂, or 5,516 lbs/household on average. While only half of the participants reported their results, the resultant trend suggests that households were, on average, able to achieve a 5,000 lb minimum carbon reduction.

Of those to report their results, almost 80% identified themselves as homeowners and 20% were renters. The reported income per household was \$120,000 or more and the average family size was 2.7 persons.

Davis, CA is a unique city in that many offices are located on campus or within the city limits. Furthermore, many LCD participants were early adopters of greenhouse gas reduction; over half reported bicycling to work or taking alternative transportation. The average round trip commute for all reporting participants was 15 miles. The survey revealed that participants were willing to give up driving if their round trip commute was 10 miles or less.

The average baseline carbon footprint using the CoolCalifornia carbon calculator was 33 annual tons of CO₂ per year. Households ranged evenly from 10 to 53 tons of CO₂ per year.

The chart below shows the **top five most popular actions** to be adopted within the program. Not coincidentally, all of the most popular actions involve changes in behavior. Behavioral changes were reportedly easier and cheaper to adopt.

Rank	Action	Lbs CO ₂ saved	Number of Households
1	Turn appliances all the way off	19600	34
2	Switch from meat to vegetarian 1 or more days/week	28000	28
3	Reduce hot water used in showers	15600	26
4	Reduce warm or hot wash loads per week	6800	26
5	Reduce miles driven in a car or truck by 20%	30513	22

The most popular changes did not necessarily render the greatest carbon savings. The **five most frequent and efficient** actions to reduce carbon emissions are shown in the chart below.

Rank	Action	Lbs CO ₂ saved	Number of Households
1	Reduce solid waste to a smaller container	30680	14
2	Reduce vehicle miles traveled by 20%	30513	22
3	Switch from meat to vegetarian 1 or more days/week	28000	28
4	Implement fuel efficient driving practices	23500	19
5	Turn appliances all the way off	19600	34

Due to the positive feedback and success of this pilot program, the city's Sustainability Team is looking to expand the Low Carbon Diet program to a broader community audience. The city is partnering with the school district's Green Schools Initiative to promote the LCD student companion book "Journey for the Planet" for 4th through 7th grade students. The Sustainability Team is also working with faith-based organizations and environmental groups to help members increase their environmental stewardship by practicing the actions taught in the Low Carbon Diet program.

If you are a member of a PTA, Montessori school, faith-based organization, and/or environmental group and would like to learn how to get involved or spread the word to your organization, please email the Sustainability Team at lowcarbondiet@cityofdavis.org or call Kim Vincent in the Parks & General Services Department at (530) 757-5656 extension 7023.

City Anticipates Cuts in Budget Due to Stormy Economic Climate

It's no surprise that the economy is struggling. While Davis' local economy is more sheltered from the storm than some municipalities, the community is not immune to economic pitfalls. The city council is currently wrestling with the challenge of shaving an estimated \$3 million from the city's upcoming 2009-2010 budget, which starts in July.

Davis is heavily dependent on sales tax and property tax to generate revenue for city operations, including fire, police, recreation programs, and upkeep of parks. Property taxes are now assumed to grow no more than 2% (much less than recent years), while sales tax is projected to decrease between 8% and 10%. Other revenue streams continue to be lower as well. At the same time, health insurance and other personnel costs put pressures on the city's budget.

The city is working to rein in spending for this budget year. Cost containment measures include keeping vacant positions open where possible, significantly reducing dollars spent for travel and training and foregoing some project expenditures for now. Non-public safety departments have been asked to provide cut lists of 7% and 10%; the fire and police departments have been asked for cuts of 3% and 5% of their budgets. The city manager has reviewed and prioritized these recommendations into a tiered package. The city council is discussing reductions using this package as a tool.

It is the goal of the city council to maintain a reserve fund with an amount equivalent to 15% of the General Fund.

While the economic situation requires significant cuts to the General Fund budget, all the news is not bad. The city continues to retain a reserve fund equivalent to 15% of the General Fund, consistent with council policy. The city has ample liquidity, with a reliable cash flow, and the city's investment rating is high at AAA. Citywide property values remain less impacted than those in the surrounding areas. While it is a stormy economic climate, the city has a foundation in place to weather that storm.

Where does the city go from here? The city council, with initial recommendations from the city staff, is reviewing both the proposed budget and the suggested cuts during April and May. The council must have a budget in place prior to the first day of the city's new fiscal year, July 1. The discussions during the spring focus on the impacts of anticipated cuts, as well as the value of the programs the city currently offers.

For more information, see www.cityofdavis.org or call (530) 757-5602.

Adult Softball Leagues

Do you want to get some exercise, be able to socialize with friends and enjoy the outdoors? Then come play softball! The city of Davis offers Adult Softball leagues for men's, women's and coed teams. The leagues have games Sunday through Friday at Playfields Park and at Community Park. Batting cages and a well-stocked snack bar are also available for your convenience. Come play on two natural turf softball fields rated as some of the best maintained in Northern California!

For more information contact the Community Services Department at (530) 757-5626 or check out our webpage at www.cityofdavis.org/cs/softball

