

THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MA

Country Home magazine has listed Springfield among the top five cities nationwide in its “Best Green Places” study. The study is featured in the April 2007 issue of Country Home Magazine. The award was based upon key green features of Springfield such as: water quality, well-designed urban parks, regional recycling efforts and key green non-profits like the ReStore Home Improvement Center.



US Airways featured the City of Springfield in their November 2007 in-flight magazine after a New York Times article chronicled the revitalization of the City.



The city has also undertaken several efforts which try to balance the economic, social and environmental concerns of the city. These efforts include improving the energy efficiency of the city’s schools, retro-fitting school buses to reduce emissions¹, and signing on to the US Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement.²

Lessons Learned:

- Green Infrastructure can bring positive media attention to a city.
- The importance of civic investment in sustainable initiatives that save municipalities money AND are good for the environment and the people.



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THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MA BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Springfield, MA is an urban center in a generally rural/suburban area of Massachusetts. It has many historic buildings and parks, tourist attractions like the Basketball hall of fame and a diverse and lively populace. However, the city is facing many economic and social challenges – 23% of people in Springfield were living below the poverty level in 1999, compared to only 9.3% statewide according to the US Census. The 2006 American Communities Survey has shown that percentage of individuals living in poverty rising to 28%.³ The city itself has been struggling economically and was taken over in 2004 by a state-appointed Finance Control Board to address their economic issues.⁴ The City has experienced tremendous economic growth since then, eliminating a \$41 million budget deficit while building a City Savings account of \$17 million.⁵

Efficiency initiatives are becoming increasingly popular for cities, especially as Energy Service companies (ESCO's) have stepped in to help provide financing.⁶ ESCO's design, implement and finance energy improvements, taking on some of the performance risk and arranging financing for the business or government undertaking the efficiency initiative.

The mayor's climate protection agreement has been signed by over 600 mayors across the US and Puerto Rico. The widespread adoption of this agreement proves its transferability, but not necessarily its effectiveness at creating change on the ground.

Not every city can be named a "green city" by a national magazine, but the article on Springfield, MA reminds us that publicity can help put positive political pressure on taking sustainable actions.

¹ <http://urbancompass.net/?p=570>

² <http://www.usmayors.org/climateprotection/documents/mcpAgreement.pdf>

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

⁴ http://www.springfieldcityhall.com/COS/control_board.0.html

⁵ Azell Murphy Cavaan - Community Relations Director – City of Springfield

⁶ <http://www.naesco.org/about/esco.htm>



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